

**REFLECTIONS OF SCHOOL STAFF ON HEADTEACHER  
LEADERSHIP AND HOW IT IS PRACTICED IN THEIR  
STATE, BOYS' SELECTIVE SCHOOLS**

**By**

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## **ABSTRACT**

It has been said that of the various possible school-based factors, it is the headteachers' leadership that has the second greatest impact on student outcomes. If that is the case, it is not surprising that a great deal of research has focused on headteacher leadership. There has been very little research, however, that focuses on the leadership of selective schools. This study, therefore, considers headteacher leadership in four state, boys' selective schools.

The study considers the interaction of three issues – what it is the headteachers say they are doing (their declared conceptualisations of leadership), what their staff expect of them (the staff's conceptualisations of leadership) and the perceptions and judgements made by the staff of their headteachers.

The study generates four models of headteacher leadership, three from the data and one from the literature. The three are perspectival in origin, although one of them is abstracted beyond its original perspective. Three of the areas considered in relation to perceptions and judgments are: headteacher 'success', communication, and conflict. The subsequent discussion leads to the development of new models and frameworks, plus the extension of two concepts in new ways and also recommendations for both practice and research.

## **DEDICATION**

**To my late wife,  
Nicky Shephard,  
who wanted me to finish  
and for whom I have done so.**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

**I express my gratitude to my supervisor, Dr Christopher Rhodes, whose wise advice, challenge and support ensured that I was able to complete this work after my five years leave of absence.**

**My thanks are also extended to Prof. David Hartley, my supervisor for the first phase of the work on this thesis and who retired before I decided to complete it.**

## **TABLE of CONTENTS**

<b>Abstract</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Dedication</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Acknowledgement</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Table of Figures</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>Table of Tables</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>Table of Abbreviations</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1 The Study</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.2 Overview of the Literature Review</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1.3 Research Design and Ethical Issues</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1.4 Thesis Structure</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	
<b>2.1 Establishing the Way Forward</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>2.2 Teacher Job Satisfaction</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>2.3 Exploring Further</b>	<b>20</b>
2.3.1 Participation	21
2.3.2 Individual Concern	25
2.3.3 Direction	27
2.3.4 Communication	28

2.3.5	Trust	33
2.3.6	Culture	34
<b>2.4</b>	<b>A Synthesis</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>2.5</b>	<b>Additional Links to the Literature on Leadership</b>	<b>40</b>
2.5.1	Further Reflections of Leadership	40
2.5.2	Middle Leadership, Professional Identity and Self-Efficacy	42
2.5.3	The Impact on the Headteacher	46
<b>2.6</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>49</b>

## **CHAPTER 3 – DESIGN & METHODOLOGY**

<b>3.1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Wider Frameworks</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Philosophical Approach</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>3.4</b>	<b>Research Strategy</b>	<b>56</b>
3.4.1	Methodology	56
3.4.2	Methods	57
3.4.2.1	Research Instrument	59
3.4.2.2	Interviewing	60
3.4.3	Management	62
3.4.3.1	Access and choice of schools	62
3.4.3.2	Ethics	63
3.4.3.3	Sample	65
3.4.3.3.1	Interviewees	66
3.4.3.4	Reliability	68

3.4.3.5	Validity	70
<b>3.5</b>	<b>Analysis</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>3.6</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>74</b>
 <b>CHAPTER 4 – FINDINGS and DISCUSSION 1: RQ1 &amp; RQ2</b>		
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Conceptualisations of Leadership: Headteachers (RQ1)</b>	<b>77</b>
4.2.1	The ‘Role’ of a Headteacher	77
4.2.1.1	School A	78
4.2.1.2	School B	79
4.2.1.3	School C	81
4.2.1.4	School D	82
4.2.1.5	Across the Schools	83
4.2.2	The ‘Qualities’ of a Headteacher	85
4.2.3	Discussion	86
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Conceptualisations of Leadership: SLT (RQ2)</b>	<b>92</b>
4.3.1	The ‘Role’ and ‘Qualities’ of a Headteacher	92
<b>4.4</b>	<b>Conceptualisations of Leadership: non-SLT (RQ2)</b>	<b>102</b>
4.4.1	The ‘Role’ of a Headteacher	102
4.4.2	The ‘Qualities’ of a Headteacher	104
4.4.3	A Third Model of Headteacher Leadership	106
<b>4.5</b>	<b>The Three Models of Headteacher Leadership – further discussion and summary</b>	<b>110</b>



## **CHAPTER 5 - FINDINGS and DISCUSSION 2: RQ3**

<b>5.1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>113</b>
<b>5.2</b>	<b>Participants' reflections on their Headteachers' Leadership</b>	<b>113</b>
5.2.1	School A	113
5.2.2	School B	116
5.2.3	School C	119
5.2.4	School D	122
5.2.5	Summary	125
<b>5.3</b>	<b>Trust and Support</b>	<b>128</b>
<b>5.4</b>	<b>Judgments of 'Success'</b>	<b>134</b>
<b>5.5</b>	<b>Communication</b>	<b>146</b>
<b>5.6</b>	<b>Issues of Conflict</b>	<b>155</b>
<b>5.7</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>162</b>

## **CHAPTER 6 – CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS**

<b>6.1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>168</b>
<b>6.2</b>	<b>Contribution to Knowledge</b>	<b>168</b>
6.2.1	Research Question 1	168
6.2.2	Research Question 2	172
6.2.3	Research Question 3	176
6.2.4	Subsidiary Issues	182
<b>6.3</b>	<b>Implications</b>	<b>184</b>
<b>6.4</b>	<b>Further Work</b>	<b>190</b>
6.4.1	Models of Headteacher Leadership	190

6.4.2	Perceptions and Judgements	192
6.5	Recommendations	194
	References	197
	Appendices	217

## TABLE OF FIGURES

<b>Fig. 1.1: Interaction of the three basic questions of the study</b>	2
<b>Fig. 2.2 A three-domain model of teacher satisfaction, adapted from Dinham and Scott, 2000, p393</b>	16
<b>Fig. 2.3.4: Speculative link between SLT-Staff values-consonance and information flow, in the manner of Wallace (2002, p182)</b>	32, 152, 179
<b>Fig. 2.4: High-level ‘Ideal Headteacher’ model</b>	38, 172
<b>Fig. 3.3: Four paradigms for the analysis of social theory, slightly modified from Burrell &amp; Morgan (1985, p22)</b>	54
<b>Fig. 4.2.3: ‘Values to Action’: a model for headteacher leadership</b>	88, 169
<b>Fig. 4.3.1a: Two-layered picture of headteacher leadership</b>	96, 174
<b>Fig. 4.3.1b: Model A</b>	98, 175
<b>Fig. 4.3.1c: Model B</b>	98, 175
<b>Fig. 4.4.3: Desired Headteacher Model</b>	108, 173
<b>Fig. 5.4a: Differences in emphasis in considering “success” of the headteacher</b>	136
<b>Fig. 5.4b: Headteacher success – all groups</b>	139
<b>Fig. 5.6: Conflict Model</b>	160, 181
<b>Fig. 6.2.1 – Elements of Headteacher Declared Conceptualisations of Leadership</b>	175

## TABLE OF TABLES

<b>Table 2.3.4: Hodgkinson’s (1991) tiered model of values (adapted from Haydon (2007), p11)</b>	31
<b>Table 3.4.3.3.1: Interviewees involved in this study</b>	67
<b>Table 4.1: Themes that emerged from the transcripts</b>	74
<b>Table 4.3.1: Headteacher Skills identified by the SLT</b>	94
<b>Table 4.4.1: Results from the non-SLT group (responses of at least 25% (5 or more)) for the theme ‘Role’</b>	103
<b>Table 4.4.2: Results from the group non-SLT (responses of at least 25% (5 or more)) for the theme ‘Qualities’</b>	105
<b>Table 5.2.5: Summary of Issues linked to Consultation Mechanisms from the Study</b>	126/7
<b>Table 5.4a: Results from the group non-SLT (responses of at least 25% (4 or more)) for the theme ‘Success’</b>	137
<b>Table 5.4b: Layered Internal view of Headteacher/School Success</b>	142, 177
<b>Table 5.5a: School based barriers to communication</b>	150, 178
<b>Table 5.6a: Causes of conflict as identified by the headteachers</b>	157
<b>Table 5.6b: Conflict Framework</b>	159, 180
<b>Table 6.2.1 – Elements of Headteacher Declared Conceptualisations of Leadership</b>	170
<b>Table 6.2.2: Three Models of Headteacher Leadership derived from the Interviewees</b>	176

## **TABLE of ABBREVIATIONS**

AH	Assistant Headteacher
API	Ascribed Professional Identity
BEI	British educational Index
CVA	Contextualised Value-Added
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families
DH	Deputy Headteacher
GB	Governing Body
HT	Headteacher
MPI	My Professional Identity
MS	Mainscale (Teacher)
NPQH	National Professional Qualification for Headship
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
PI	Professional Identity
PO	Professionalism Orientation
PSE	Principal Self-Efficacy
PSO	Professional Significant Other
RQ	Research Question
Sch	School
SIP	School Improvement Partner
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
SNT	Senior non-teacher
TLR	Teaching and Learning Responsibility
TLR1	Teaching and Learning Responsibility 1 (the upper tier of responsibility)
TLR2	Teaching and Learning Responsibility 2 (the lower tier of responsibility)

# **REFLECTIONS OF SCHOOL STAFF ON HEADTEACHER LEADERSHIP AND HOW IT IS PRACTICED IN THEIR STATE, BOYS' SELECTIVE SCHOOLS**

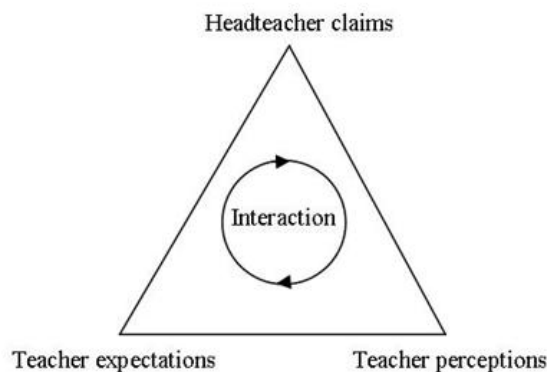
## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 The Study**

Possibly all teachers possess implicit conceptualisations of leadership in the form of ideas of what headteachers should be doing, how they should be doing it, and how they perceive and judge it to be done. Whether the perception is considered fair or unfair may depend on whether one is on the receiving end or not, but what are these conceptualisations? How do they compare with their headteachers' conceptualisations of leadership and how are judgements subsequently formed?

Studies by Evans (1997, 2000 and 2001) into school teacher morale, job satisfaction and motivation suggest that both directly and indirectly, particularly during periods of change, the actions of those in school leadership matter. Evans (2001, p305) states that "[u]nderstanding what matters to people and ... [their] work context ... are crucial to effective leadership", this is because of the impact at many levels of the actions of those in leadership. In their study of principal and teacher sources of leadership within a school, Leithwood & Jantzi (1999) suggest that the working of school leadership teams has an impact at student level, a view echoed by Harris *et al* (2003). In a later study, Leithwood *et al* (2004) estimated that principal leadership accounted for 25% of direct and indirect effects on student learning (a

claim questioned by Kurt *et al* (2012)), being second only to classroom interaction. Heck & Hallinger (2010) go further in a longitudinal study suggesting that the style of leadership matters, in their case a collaborative approach impacted positively on student outcomes. Day *et al* (2006, 2007) found that the quality of leadership at both school and departmental levels is a major factor in teachers' sustained commitment and motivation to remain in or leave a school. How school leadership is practiced, it would seem, matters.



**Fig. 1.1: Interaction of the three basic questions of the study**

A critical review of the literature indicates that leadership takes place in the triadic space of leader, follower and context (Jarvis, 2010). No examination of leadership is complete without an examination of the followers, or at least those who could be regarded as potential followers. This study, therefore, seeks to look at what it is that four leaders of schools (headteachers) claim to be doing – the headteachers' conceptualisations of leadership. It also looks at the expectations placed on them by 27 members of their staff (25 teachers and two senior non-teachers) – the staff members' conceptualisations of leadership. It then seeks to establish how the staff perceive and judge their headteacher's success, in order to try to understand why such judgments are formed. The intention is to investigate the triangle (fig. 1.1) generated by: headteacher claims (their conceptualisations of leadership), staff expectations (their conceptualisations of leadership), and staff perceptions and judgments of

their headteachers. This may help identify aspects of headteacher identification, preparation, support and practice that could lead, ultimately, to improved student learning (Leithwood *et al*, 2008) and thereby improved student outcomes.

The context is state boys' selective schools, a context in which the researcher worked as a headteacher. This is a little studied context, other than as part of larger and more diverse samples and sometimes as part of studies of student outcomes for comparison with other educational settings (for example Boliver & Swift (2011)). The researcher's own school being in a region of England suggested that access to other headteachers and their staff would be more likely to be achieved in this region.

The researcher's personal headteacher experience and interaction with headteachers suggested that headteachers' claims may reveal two basic foundations for their actions – their philosophies of education and their conceptualisations of leadership, which in turn may reflect personal values. This is also likely to be true of their staff, although perhaps to a lesser extent. Where staff conceptualisations and philosophies are at variance with their headteachers conflict may ensue, influencing their perceptions and judgments of their headteachers. The basic elements of claims, expectations and judgments would be in a state of flux, since neither people nor their contexts are constant, but each develop over time and in response to stimuli that impinge subsequently on their interactions. Such changes can be both evolutionary and revolutionary.

In the light of the discussion above, three research questions are asked, which drive the entire study and its presentation:



- RQ1** What are the headteachers' declared conceptualisations of leadership?
- RQ2** What are the staff's implicit (or otherwise) conceptualisations of headteacher leadership?
- RQ3** What are the perceptions and judgments held by staff of their headteachers' leadership?

## **1.2 Overview of the Literature Review**

As an initial approach to access relevant literature, the literature on teacher job satisfaction was explored. An overview of quantitative studies was undertaken, but problems were found in that definitions sometimes varied from one study to another (Menon & Athanasoula-Reppa, 2011), as could the measuring instrument used (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). The result was a degree of confusion, with sometimes contradictory results from the studies, even within the same country (Crossman & Harris, 2006). Following this, two significant qualitative studies were considered. Dinham & Scott's (1998) three domain model was used to focus attention on school based factors that could be either causes of satisfaction or dissatisfaction for teachers (the third domain). Studies by Evans (1997, 2000, 2001) were then used to explore this third domain, leading to the concept of teacher-centred leadership (Evans, 2000), with connections being made to some other leadership theories.

While Evan's (1998) work could be criticised for being narrowly based, a significant degree of validation was found in a raft of other studies, resulting in a conclusion that there are four important aspects of school leadership: participation, individual concern, direction and

communication, each being explored further. Consideration of ‘participation’ led to a brief examination of distributed leadership, which concluded that perhaps the most useful concept was that of hybrid leadership configurations (Gronn, 2009). Additional evidence was found for a link between ‘individual concern’ and teacher job satisfaction. ‘Direction’ was explored concluding that what is key is the sense of the school moving forward and perceived to be making progress, rather than any formulation of words. The work of De Nobile & McCormick (2008b) on communication and its link to job satisfaction was explored, leading to a brief consideration of values, based on the work of Hodgkinson (1991, 1999), his view of values as “concepts of the desirable” (1999, p7) that influence action was seen as important. An outcome of the consideration of communication and values was a speculative model linking the quality of information flow to the degree of values consonance between the SLT and the school staff.

From all of the foregoing it became clear that the concepts of trust and culture were important. Two major works, one by Tschannen-Moran (2004) and the other by Bryk & Schneider (2003, 2004) proved to be relevant, with the idea that trust is engendered when expectations are validated by action, and also the centrality of relationships, thereby emphasising the interactive nature of the three research questions. Deal & Kennedy (1988) stressed that values were part of the bedrock of culture and that trying to change culture was a long term process. The work of Engels *et al* (2008) on the nature of positive school culture was pertinent.

The preceding, in particular the ‘four important aspects of school leadership’ (participation, individual concern, direction and communication) were synthesised into a model for the ‘Ideal Headteacher’ (fig.2.5). Further consideration of the literature showed that, while the model

could be seen to lie within a number of established models of leadership, it did not favour any particular one.

Consideration was then given to the impact of the model upon the middle leaders and the headteachers. For the middle leaders (usually considered in the literature pertaining to the secondary sector to be subject leaders), upon whom much of the ‘participation’ might be expected to fall, the potential role conflict created by the opposite pulls of the expectations of their senior leaders and of their departmental colleagues was explored. The works of Beijaard *et al* (2004) on professional identity and Tschannen-Moran & Hoy (2001) on self-efficacy proved to be particularly helpful. For the headteachers the ‘Ideal Headteacher’ model was seen to require high-level intra- and inter-personal skills, particularly in view of the need for meaningful ‘individual concern’ to be demonstrated. The strains this all places upon a headteacher prove to be at the personal cost of the role-holder (Crawford, 2007a; Rhodes & Greenway, 2010). The triadic nature of leadership (leader, follower, context) appeared to suggest that leadership as ‘performance’ (Peck *et al*, 2009) may prove to be a useful perspective. The literature review concluded that for both the middle leaders and the headteachers a focus on acculturation, assimilation and actuation (Rhodes & Fletcher, 2013) may help them to meet the demands placed upon them

### **1.3 Research Design and Ethical Issues**

Exploration by means of a case study seemed likely to enhance the practicability of the project, although there is the tension that the resulting data and its analysis may be entirely

particular to the school in question. By the use of a group of four case study schools the weakness of a single case study is reduced and the likelihood of enhancing some degree of generalisability or at least relatability (defined by Bassey (2001) as “the extent to which teachers reading the report of the study can relate it to their own [context]” (p5)) is increased. As a concept, relatability has come under some criticism (Hammersley, 2001; Pratt, 2003), even so, the concept is intuitive and was employed in this study.

Within each school a sample of staff was interviewed in relation to school leadership and their perceptions on how it is practiced at their establishment. In addition the headteachers were questioned in order to access their conceptualisations of school leadership. The use of a survey of all staff was considered, but deemed impracticable because the nature of the data to be obtained required that depth be achieved in the responses in order to determine and explore the implicit conceptualisations, perceptions and the reasons for the perceptions. Such responses required a data gathering instrument that possessed the flexibility to achieve responses in depth, accordingly a semi-structured questionnaire was utilised, the design being influenced by the outcomes of the literature review. Such an instrument provides the required flexibility (Denscombe, 2003). In order to ensure that the interview schedule contained some validity, it was piloted in the researcher’s own school (accepting the limitations of this device due to issues of power relationships) leading to some alterations to improve its validity. The use of a single method across four schools constitutes an application of within-method triangulation (Cohen *et al*, 2000).

In each school up to nine interviews were undertaken, the sample reflecting the hierarchical nature of teaching and learning responsibility (TLR) payments in schools. Guidance on the hierarchical nature of the group of interviewees within each school was provided:

- 2 main scale teachers,
- 2 TLR2 post holder,
- 2 TLR1 post holder,
- 2 members of the SLT other than the headteacher (possibly to include the bursar or post holder with responsibilities that include those of the bursar),
- headteacher.

The first three categories constitute the largest groups in most secondary schools, with the number of respondents reflecting this. The members of the SLT were included in order to access the leadership conceptualisations and perceptions of those who are closely linked to the headteacher and yet may be considered to possess some degree of a boundary role between the teaching staff and the headteacher. The possible inclusion of the bursar (or senior non-teacher member of the SLT) reflects two issues. The first is the rise of the bursar (or school business manager) at many schools to the SLT who may be considered to be operating at a point of cultural divide within the school, the perspective being likely to be unencumbered by a traditional teaching background. Secondly, the bursar may also be considered to possess a boundary role between the non-teaching staff and the headteacher. While guidance was given to the headteachers, the choice of interviewees and how that choice was made lay with the headteachers. It is accepted that it is most likely that volunteers were sought, in which case the resulting sample may possess bias, for those that volunteer may be more likely to include those who are more confident in expressing their ideas, or are more likely to express ideas in

line with the headteacher or perhaps even including those who feel that they have an issue they wish to get off their chests. Whichever of these and others may be the case, an element of bias may have been introduced, possibly impacting on the resulting validity of the outcomes of the study: the offer of anonymity, confidentiality and no-harm sought to reduce this threat.

The analysis was based upon the transcripts of 31 interviews conducted for the study, those transcripts having been checked for accuracy by the interviewees, altered if necessary and agreed by the interviewees. These transcripts were analysed using colour coding and ‘cutting and pasting’, looking for common themes, most of which were designed into the interview schedule.

In order to increase reliability, the four schools were chosen from a sub-group of secondary schools that reflected the researcher’s own setting, namely state boys’ selective schools in a region of England. As far as is possible, the settings of the schools were varied, but there are limitations in achieving this, firstly that there are only 164 (at the time of writing) state selective schools, less than half being boys’ and secondly the issue of access. As a headteacher, the researcher sought to use his position to gain access to the schools of headteacher colleagues. Whilst this probably increased the likelihood of gaining access, there may have been a resulting issue of whether respondents within a school would then feel that their views would be shared with their headteachers and anonymity not be preserved. While assurances were provided that participation was on the basis of ‘no-harm’, this may still have coloured the responses given and also the decision as to whether a teacher participated or not. In the event, criticisms of headteachers were voiced, but it is not possible to know if further

criticisms would have been voiced if the researcher were not from within the sector being studied. It is likely that the headteacher invited participation, therefore power relationships in the school may have influenced the willingness of the respondents to take part in the study and be open in their responses. Given that the data for the study and upon which the analysis is based are the transcriptions of what the respondents said, their openness is of importance. That many interviewees included criticism of their headteachers suggested that they felt safe with the process.

Every study raises ethical issues and this is no exception. For this study the key guidelines were those of BERA (2011). In particular, responsibilities to the participants and to the community of educational researchers were held to be of paramount importance.

With regard to the participants:

- participation in the study was on the basis of voluntary informed consent and openness on the part of the researcher was maintained at all times;
- all of the case study schools and interviewees were assured of anonymity and that the principle of 'no harm' would be honoured;
- interviewees were given the opportunity to check their interview transcripts for accuracy and for editing or even to remove themselves and their transcripts from the study at any time;
- all source material was accessed by the researcher and no-one else. No disclosure of source material, other than the interviewee's own transcript to the interviewee, was made;

- with the exception of piloting the research instrument, all schools were other than the researcher's own school, where power relationships would be likely to impact on the outcomes strongly;
- each school that participated in the research will be given an executive summary of the key issues derived from the research.

With regard to the community of educational researchers:

- all methods employed in the study are fit for purpose;
- the bibliography is a complete list of all material utilised in the study;
- the researcher has undertaken the study with integrity at all times.

#### **1.4 Thesis Structure**

This thesis consists of six chapters: Introduction; Literature Review; Design and Methodology; Findings and Discussion 1 (RQ1 & 2); Findings and Discussion 2 (RQ3); and Conclusion and Recommendations.

**Chapter 1 – Introduction:** The introduction contextualises the research, states the research questions investigated, and provides an overview of the relevant literature, the research design and underlying ethical principles.

**Chapter 2 – Literature Review:** An overview of this is provided in the Introduction.



**Chapter 3 – Design and Methodology:** An overview of this is provided in the Introduction.

**Chapter 4 – Findings and Discussion 1 (RQ1 and RQ2):** The presentation and discussion of findings linked to the conceptualisations of headteacher leadership: by the headteachers (RQ1); and by their staff (RQ2). The staff are treated as two groups – SLT and non-SLT. Three models of headteacher leadership are generated, with the subsequent discussion including a model generated from the Literature Review.

**Chapter 5 – Findings and Discussion 2 (RQ3):** Reflections of the three main groups (Headteacher, SLT and non-SLT) on the headteachers' leadership are presented. In the subsequent discussions particular emphasis is given to consultation, communication, Headteacher 'success', and conflict.

**Chapter 6 – Conclusion and Recommendations:** A summary of key findings is presented representing a contribution to knowledge, plus their implications and scope for further work. Six recommendations are made concerning practice and research.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Establishing the Way Forward**

The study concerns the conceptualisations of leadership by headteachers and their staff and the perceptions by the staff of their headteachers' leadership. To reflect this, and the fact that the main group being studied was from the teaching staff, literature predominantly from 1994 (the date of a major British study – Wallace & Hall (1994)) was searched using key words that included: school, senior, leadership, management, teacher, perception and judgment. Due to personal circumstances, the study was undertaken in two phases, separated by five years. In the first phase, four search strategies were adopted:

- an electronic search of the British Education Index (BEI) (key words as stated);
- an electronic search using Scholar.Google;
- a search of the bibliographies of relevant papers;
- a search, where possible, of the indexes of journals that had yielded potentially useful articles.

At the start of the second phase a further search was undertaken including use of FindIt@Bham, the University of Birmingham's own library and journal search system. Throughout both phases additional key words were used in on-line searches as the literature indicated. While there are a vast number of papers on school leadership, comparatively few papers were directly concerned with the topic in question and even fewer considered the teacher perspective on their school's leadership (Odhiambo & Hii, 2012). An initial concern was to secure a secondary school perspective, however after considering Wallace & Huckman's (1999) major primary school study in the light of Wallace & Hall's (1994)

secondary school study, it was evident that the restriction was unnecessary, although some caution is appropriate in extrapolating across phases (Day *et al*, 2007; Butt *et al*, 2005; Sturman, 2002). Studies related to teacher job satisfaction, motivation and morale, which were mainly concerned with issues related to how the actions of school leaders impact on teachers and teachers' perceptions of leadership and what they prefer to see in their leaders, provided a route into relevant literature.

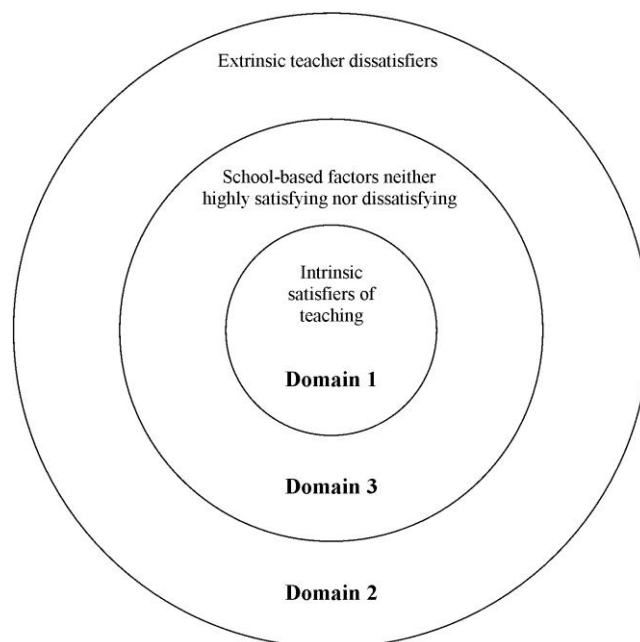
One problem found was that there are a variety of definitions of job satisfaction (Menon & Athanasoula-Reppa, 2011), also while many of the papers attempt to measure the construct there is no agreement on how it should be measured (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011; Menon & Athanasoula-Reppa, 2011), each measuring system possibly measuring different things. The messages from these quantitative studies were confusing, for example findings regarding the role of gender in job satisfaction are contradictory (Bentea & Anghelache, 2012), as are those relating to age, years of experience and position with job satisfaction (De Nobile & McCormick, 2008a). Indeed differences in findings between different countries (Dinham & Scott, 2002) and within a single country (UK) (De Nobile & McCormick, 2008a) were found. One problem may be that the model used for determining job satisfaction may not be appropriate to the context in which it is used (Evans & Olumide-Aluko, 2010) and it may be that "personal characteristics vary in their effects on job satisfaction in different settings, making their influences context-specific" (Menon & Athanasoula-Reppa, 2011, p440), even down to different types of school in the same region (Crossman & Harris, 2006). Perhaps this confusion demonstrates a weakness in a quantitative approach.

Two major qualitative studies on teacher job satisfaction, one from Australia (Dinham and Scott, 1998, 2000) and one from England (Evans, 1998, 2000, 2001) were identified as providing potential for exploring some of the issues relevant to the study. A problem with many papers was that few defined what was meant by the terms morale and motivation, preferring to use the terms loosely: Evans (1998) is an exception. She defines job satisfaction as: “a state of mind encompassing all those feelings determined by the extent to which the individual perceives her/his job-related needs are being met” (Evans, 1998, p12). Morale she regards as having a future orientation concerning an anticipation of satisfaction, while motivation encompasses “all those factors that determine the degree of inclination towards engagement in an activity” (Evans, 1998, p34). These two groups of papers, Evans (1997, 2000, 2001) and Dinham & Scott (1998, 2000), will be considered in greater detail; subsequently papers from the initial search and which appeared to relate to the research questions will be considered. From these considerations, a model will be offered for approaching the research questions.

## **2.2 Teacher Job Satisfaction**

In their multi-national study of teacher satisfaction, Dinham & Scott (1998, 2000) identified three domains that affected a teacher’s level of satisfaction (fig. 2.2). The first was at the class level - the interaction in the classroom. This was regarded as playing a significant role in enhancing satisfaction, the elements of this level being called *intrinsic satisfiers*. The second was at the level outside of the school – the state and the national levels, which were responsible for many of the initiatives that impact on schools, but which schools could not

influence. This level played a significant role in causing dissatisfaction, the elements of this level being called *extrinsic dissatisfiers*, observing that “matters over which persons perceive they have less control tend to be more dissatisfying and stressful” (Dinham & Scott, 1998, p376). Their studies identified a third domain, which was neither a satisfier nor a dissatisfier, but was capable of being both. This third domain consists of “school based factors such as school leadership, climate and decision making” (Dinham & Scott, 1998, p376) – the main focus of this study. Worryingly, Dinham & Scott (2000) suggest that the “growing strength of societal-based dissatisfiers – over which teachers have little control – has eroded satisfaction with both school-based factors and the intrinsic rewards of teaching” (p393), a sentiment echoed elsewhere (Scott *et al*, 2001; Butt & Lance, 2005).



**Fig. 2.2 A three-domain model of teacher satisfaction, adapted from Dinham and Scott, 2000, p393**

In her studies of teacher job satisfaction, motivation and morale, Evans (1997, 2000, 2001) has concentrated on this third domain. She provides a reason for the importance of this

domain, but also reflects that the outer or second domain of central initiatives can become significant:

“The reason why it is school-specific issues ... that ... take precedence as ... job satisfaction-influencing factors is that they constitute teachers’ working lives. ... Centrally initiated conditions ... only become real ... when they become contextualised.” (Evans, 1998, p141)

She adds that determinants of an individual’s attitudinal responses to change include the extent of compatibility “between their ideologies, values and beliefs and those reflected in the change they encountered” and “pragmatism: the valuation of the practical implications of the change” (Evans, 2000, p185).

Using the teacher’s perspective, her research identified five key aspects of motivational leadership: individualism, recognition, awareness, interest and direction. These she developed into what she calls teacher-centred leadership.

**Individualism** – Each teacher has individual needs which reflect their particular educational ideologies and values.

**Recognition** – Teachers need recognition of their efforts, which helps to develop their sense of self-efficacy – that what is done is worthwhile.

**Awareness** – Recognition requires awareness of what is happening in the School, which needs to be conveyed to teachers if it is to be an effective motivator.

**Interest** – Headteachers’ interest in teachers’ work is said to be a key influence in teachers’ job fulfilment, since it may contribute towards strengthening their perception of their work as valuable and worthwhile.

**Direction** – Evans (1998) identifies the term *mission* as being the process of working towards an identified and shared vision. This ‘working towards’ constitutes the *direction*. She asserts

that school leadership is most effective when it incorporates clear direction towards the realisation of a shared vision of what the school should become.

These aspects are reminiscent of servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1970), the key characteristics of which are valuing people, developing people, building community, displaying authenticity (“integrity and trust, openness and accountability, and a willingness to learn from others” (Cerit, 2009, p602)), providing leadership and sharing leadership (Laub, 1999). Cerit (2009) has defined servant leadership as “an attitude of leading others from a perspective of placing the organisational purpose, the needs of the organisation, and the needs of the people over the needs and desires of the leader” (p601). It could also be said that the key aspects of teacher-centred leadership also reflect aspects of transformational leadership, but where transformational leadership places the needs of the organisation first, with the focus on the needs of the individual being to enable the meeting of the needs of the organisation, the primary focus of servant leadership starts with the teacher and through meeting those needs, aims to meet the needs of the organisation: “first make sure that other people’s highest priority needs are being served” (Greenleaf, 1970, p6). Servant leadership has attracted much criticism, with comments that it is naive, unrealistic and can only work in certain contexts (Cerit, 2009). For the purposes of this study, whether teacher-centred leadership is an aspect of one leadership style or another is not the issue, rather it is the aspects that are stressed that are central, for they reflect the concerns and desires of the teachers in Evans (1998) study: it is this teacher perspective that informs this study. Even so, as a passing comment, it is of interest that in Cerit’s (2009) study of 29 Turkish primary schools, servant leadership, or rather valuing teachers, displaying authenticity, developing teachers and building community

all correlated significantly and positively with teacher job satisfaction, to a degree thereby validating Evans' ideas.

In an analysis across three studies, Evans (1998, 2000) sought to go to a deeper level. She identified that the individuals' needs fulfilment was the most basic determinant of levels of morale, job satisfaction and motivation. She reasoned that individuals' needs reflect their biographies and therefore their life stories, which in turn may help to determine the extent to which the individual may react to differing circumstances – what to one person may be an intolerable situation for another may be viewed as acceptable or even a positive challenge and the reasons for this may lie in the past. The individual's needs, she argues, determine their values and ideologies and thereby help to shape individuals' conceptions of their 'ideal' job – levels of job satisfaction and morale being determined by proximity to what is, at any given time, the 'ideal' job. Her analysis revealed three inter-related factors that account for the diversity of what might be the 'ideal' job: relative perspective, realistic expectations and professionalism orientation.

**Relative perspective** concerns the individual's perspective on her/his situation in relation to comparable ones, which may be previous jobs or jobs elsewhere. It also includes consideration of the work-related situation in relation to the rest of one's life and the relative prioritisation of work and private life.

**Realistic expectations** reflect what the individual realistically expects from her/his work-related situation and is influenced by relative perspective.

**Professionalism orientation** is influenced by both of the previous factors. Professionalism refers to the knowledge, skills and procedures which teachers use in their work (Evans, 2000),



combining professional ideology, job related values and vision, thereby reflecting what the individual believes education and teaching should involve, this being considered to lie on a scale from restricted to extended (Hoyle, 1975; Evans, 1998, 2000).

While Evans' (1998) first study might be criticised for being on too narrow a base, being based on a single primary school case study, her subsequent papers (2000, 2001) have broadened and deepened the base and the picture presented. The outcomes may help to understand the perspective taken by a teacher and therefore inform school leaders. While accepting that the picture that has been painted by consideration of these studies has yielded insights into the research questions, consideration of a broader and related set of studies identified by the search may help to generate a potentially more complete picture and provide a more critical perspective.

### **2.3 Exploring Further**

Consideration of a broader range of studies identified by the literature search suggests four important aspects: Participation, Individual Concern, Direction and Communication. Each of these will be discussed in turn. 'Participation' is taken to include strategies for collaboration and consultation, which help to hand over to others some element of control through working together. While the term 'direction' is not synonymous with the terms mission and vision, all three will be explored together in the same section. Individual concern will be taken to mean support for the individual so as to help maintain or increase a sense of community and aid

professional growth and has clear links to four of Evans (2000) five key aspects of motivational leadership – individualism, recognition, awareness and interest.

### **2.3.1 Participation**

Whatever the espoused reason for adopting a participative approach to leadership and management, two basic ends are served. The first concerns the acceptance that broadening the basis of decision making, or at least the information and ideas base that leads to a decision, may lead to a better decision. The second concerns the desire of those who are led or choose to be led, to be listened to and contribute their own thoughts and ideas. Crossman & Harris (2006) and Judge & Bono (2001) suggest that the ‘locus of control’ (by which they mean the extent to which individuals believe in their ability to control aspects of their life and organisational culture) has a significant correlation to job satisfaction – participation may help to internalise that sense of control. Leithwood *et al* (2002) try to explain why this would be the case by arguing that one’s perceived sense of control influences one’s emotional state, with any perceived lack of control resulting in an increased desire to regain potential control and also to avoid further lack of control. They also suggest that this very issue can be linked to the feeling of belief in one’s own abilities (self-efficacy), which in turn links to one’s feelings about the value of one’s efforts and also to a sense of collective-efficacy. Given this suggested link to a teacher’s sense of self-worth, it is not surprising that Day *et al* (2000) should observe that teachers prefer heads who encourage participation. Leadership provides a context for professional learning focussing on helping staff to confront, make sense of and interpret the current and emerging context of the school (Harris *et al*, 2003). As such, the third domain (Dinham & Scott, 1998) can provide a mechanism to enable the teachers to

understand the second domain (Dinham & Scott, 1998) and work with the leaders in enabling the school to meet the challenges presented by it. Indeed, the processes of participation in this way may help to avoid the “credibility gap” (Wallace & Hall, 1994, p131), which may arise due to the invisibility of the leadership’s interface with the second domain. By providing access to the overview that members of the leadership team may possess, along with mechanisms to ensure their opinions are valued and incorporated into the decision making process (Gurr *et al*, 2003), teachers are less likely to fight the corner that relates to their own particular work interests at the expense of the wider school interests as perceived by the leadership team (Wallace & Hall, 1994). Issues of teacher professional identity (Busher *et al*, 2007; Beijaard *et al*, 2004; Sachs, 2001) and therefore a teacher’s sense of belonging may mean that it is not as simple as this may imply.

The preceding suggests that leadership that is participative may help to meet a basic professional and personal needs in the teachers. It accepts that people need to perceive some element of control in order to feel that they are valued and that they are treated as professionals, although this may lead to conflicts linked to professionalism orientation (Evans, 2000) and professional identity (Busher, 2005). By involvement in decision making, the decision that is made is more likely to be accepted even if it does not accord with any particular individual’s ideas (Day *et al*, 2000). Barnett *et al* (2001, p16) state that “consensus and commitment were developed through leadership practices such as communication, leader credibility and the involvement of the school community in collaborative process”, thereby emphasising the need for broader leadership approaches rather than the use of collaboration or participation alone. Possible conflict arises from differing perceptions of the terms participation and consultation (for example Bogler (2001) has identified four styles of

decision making, three of which may be considered to be participative), which are likely to reflect ideological positions. By the use of participative practices expectations may be set up in the school staff, which for some are met and for others are not met. Within this scenario lies the concept of power and the use of power. As such leadership practices associated with extended professionalism may prove to be the cause of conflict because for some it may not be sufficiently democratic in its operation (Hatcher, 2004).

The idea of ‘participation’ also suggests some form of distributed leadership, although there are problems with this concept for “distributed leadership remains an unclear and divergent concept” (Hulpia *et al*, 2009, p292). Indeed other ‘forms’ of leadership - collective, collaborative, shared, emergent and co-leadership – are used by some authors interchangeably and for others there are sharp delineations (Bolden, 2011). The landscape is, therefore confusing with differences of opinion also expressed about the benefits. Hulpia *et al* (2009) suggest there is no significant link between distributed leadership and job satisfaction (at variance with the main tenor of this section) for teachers (or their leaders), while Heck & Hallinger (2010) argue that there is an indirect link between distributed leadership and student outcomes. While this confusion abounds, Harris’ (2008, p183) suggestion that distributed leadership “takes us from a “person solo” to a “person plus” perspective on leadership” would seem to be confirmed by Crawford’s (2012) review of the related literature, one conclusion of which is that there are three distinct elements of distributed leadership (p613), that:

- it is an emergent property of leadership as groups of people work together;
- it has opened up the boundaries of leadership;
- it acknowledges that expertise is not just in the few.

This is why Harris (2004) can say that it engages “expertise wherever it exists within the organisation” (p13) and that distributed leadership is a form of “collective agency” (p14).

There are problems however, for Crawford (2012) reminds us that distinct limits may be placed on distributed leadership in an age of high levels of accountability to external agents. The result is likely to be that where distributed leadership is ‘officially sanctioned’ “it is always delegated, licensed, exercised on behalf of and revocable by authority – the headteacher” (Hatcher, 2004, p4). The result is that “while participation is nominally inclusive, authority is exclusive” (p5). So, if the outcome is such that the headteacher disagrees, it can be vetoed. This, for Hatcher (2004), is not distributed leadership. Rather he suggests that distributed leadership must be much more democratic, something with which Woods (2004) would disagree, for he sees democratic leadership and distributed leadership as different entities. If one takes Crawford’s (2012) broader view of distributed leadership, it concerns groups of people (not necessarily including a person in a formal leadership position) working together on an issue of school improvement and whose work has been sanctioned by the headteacher. This concentration upon groups and teachers acting in a leadership capacity places a high degree of importance on trust (Muijs & Harris, 2007) and this is most likely to develop in schools “where relationships are strong” (Muijs & Harris, 2007, p131), perhaps emphasising the issue of ‘individual concern’, the theme of the next section.

In many, perhaps most schools leadership can be seen in both the “person-solo” and the “person plus” forms (Harris, 2008, p183) and it is in acceptance of this diversified reality that Gronn (2009, 2010) has proposed a different idea, namely that of leadership being ‘hybrid’, where a “mixed combination of solo performance in combination with dyadic, team and other

multi-party formations” (Gronn, 2009, p131) is the norm and where “division of labour keeps transforming itself in response to new and unanticipated demands” (Gronn, 2010, p424). He regards the argument about whether leadership is focussed or distributed (whatever that may mean) as not relevant, putting forward the concept of leadership configurations - “a pattern or an arrangement of co-occurring elements” (Gronn, 2010, p422). In addition, avoiding the term ‘distributed’ may help to avoid the possible implication that all sources of influence carry equal weight (Gronn, 2009). How this idea relates to the schools in the study will be of interest, as will be the reactions of the teachers to the leadership configurations they perceive.

### **2.3.2 Individual Concern**

Leithwood & Riehl (2003) remind us that leadership exists within social relationships and these relationships form a complex web “across multiple internal and external constituencies and social networks” (p7). In some sense therefore, leadership needs to fit within a community and the management of that community, both social and professional, is linked to the successful management of change and also to positive perceptions of leadership by the teachers (Mulford, 2003). Leithwood *et al* (2002) identify a significant relationship between a teachers’ sense of self-efficacy and leadership practices, practices that can be as simple as the provision of positive feedback by colleagues and superiors. Indeed they state that such honorific rewards can produce a feeling of enjoyment, satisfaction and happiness, with a direct by-product in terms of subsequent extra effort and effectiveness (Barnett *et al*, 2000). Because leadership is a process that occurs at an individual level as much as at an institutional level, such ‘individual concern’ (defined as “items that indicate a leader respects followers and is concerned about their welfare” (Barnett *et al*, 2000, p5)) becomes a critical leadership

task (Barnett *et al*, 2000), which builds the capacity of teachers to identify and pursue a shared vision. ‘Individual concern’, therefore, helps to increase the support and commitment of the school community for the goals of the school (Barnett *et al*, 2001), because the leaders tend to read and respond to day-to-day challenges from a human relationships perspective. This is in line with Evans (2000) teacher-centred approach and one of the findings of Day *et al* (2000) when they suggest that morality, emotion and social bonds provide far more powerful stimulants to motivation and commitment than the extrinsic concerns of transactional leadership.

This message could also be seen to be reflected in the preceding section on participation, particularly in that implied was a valuing of the viewpoint of the individual staff member and how it could contribute to the eventual decision and its implementation. Implied also is a concern for the individual’s professional development. One way this is worked out is by the provision of the sense of overview of the school and its broader context. A second way is that involving staff within the decision making process is itself a mechanism for raising awareness and developing reflective capacities. It is, therefore, an aspect of continuing professional development, and accepts that this may mean investment of the school’s resources in the individual. Day *et al* (2000) state that teachers react positively to such support, which can lead to school success (Gurr *et al*, 2003), another outcome being increased feelings of job satisfaction (Crossman & Harris, 2006). Evans (2000) is keen to point out that when the support provided by the leadership is one sided and concentrates upon the social rather than combining both the social and the professional, then the result can be dissatisfaction and a lack of direction for the school. Implicit here is the idea of values (considered further in section 2.3.4), since they are reflected in mission and also in the approach that takes the

broader support of the individual as a basic task. In addition interaction needs to be seen to be fair, thereby helping to reduce ambiguity and unpredictability, increase solidarity and reduce barriers to communication (Barnett *et al*, 2001).

### **2.3.3 Direction**

Of the three terms vision, mission and direction, it is direction that Evans (2000) regards as being crucial. There is no consensus on the meanings of the terms mission and vision. Mission has been referred to as pointing the direction for the school and reflecting the school's underlying philosophy (Nias *et al*, 1989) and more broadly by Evans (2000) as providing focus, direction and purpose to leadership and also reflecting the beliefs and values that underlie leadership behaviour. As such it is a “strategic plan aimed at realising a vision” (Evans, 2000, p124). Such a definition begs the question of what is meant by vision, a term that is preferred by some writers (for example Coulson (1988)). For Evans (2000), vision reflects how the leader would like the school to develop but does not necessarily have the strength of commitment and focus associated with a mission. While mission may be lacking and possibly not necessary, the sense of direction associated with mission and vision helps to provide a sense of purpose (Nias, 1980), particularly for teachers with extended professionalism (Evans, 2000).

Implicit is the need for mechanisms for the creation of a shared vision and therefore for collaborative practices that help to develop shared vision and thereby help to “bind people together and establish group ownership” (Barnett, 2001, p16). By the provision of such



organisational frameworks the leader is ensuring that the direction is likely to be supported, or at least reduces potential conflict.

To an extent the direction itself is not key to staff acceptance and therefore enhancing motivation, rather it is the existence of a direction and how well it is implemented that are central (Day *et al*, 2000). Teachers see one function of leadership being the provision of direction (Evans, 1998; Day *et al*, 1999; Day *et al*, 2000) and the absence of direction could be interpreted as an abrogation of responsibility for which the leader is being paid (Evans, 2000). (In essence this may constitute part of a teacher's implicit conceptualisation of school leadership.) This should not be taken to mean that *any* direction will suffice. The direction, or vision, needs to be based on educational ideologies and values (Evans, 2000), those ideologies being shared by or at least acceptable to the majority of the staff. Those values and the working out of those values, however, can cause dissonance or consonance, given a context in which the teachers themselves possess values. Where there is dissonance, the result may be low morale and dissatisfaction. Where there is consonance the results are more likely to be enhanced motivation (Evans, 2000). A willingness to work with school leadership on the realisation of the vision reflects an alignment with policy and decision making and is likely to result in increased support. This reflects both the areas of 'individual concern' and 'participation'.

#### **2.3.4 Communication**

Lying behind much of the preceding thematic discussion is the issue of communication and facilitating effective lines of communication - the term 'communication' (suggestive of

dialogue) being distinguished from ‘informing’ (suggestive of monologue – usually from the top of the hierarchy downwards). Within a secondary school, by virtue of size, this is as much a concern within the leadership team as it is between the leadership team and the school staff and even the broader community. Indeed Butt *et al* (2005) suggest that in secondary schools in particular there is “some dissatisfaction with communication strategies” (p468), and in their longitudinal study over ten years Weindling & Dimmock (1999) found that communication was an on-going headteacher concern even after ten years in office. In her small scale study of an elementary school in Ohio, USA, Davis (2012) comments that “without communication, expectations are unclear and teachers start deciphering the meanings on their own. Ultimately, expectations become jumbled and confused” (p79) – smaller schools too have the same problem. It is not surprising, therefore, that in their study of links between aspects of communication and job satisfaction, De Nobile & McCormick (2008b) found a positive association between open communication and job satisfaction, with similar positive associations for supportive and democratic communication (“communication related to participation and influence in decision making” (p105)) and adequacy of information (“the perception of sufficiency and adequacy of information” (p109)).

It is clear that communication matters and that failure to address this issue is likely to undermine attempts to ensure participative or collaborative leadership, display individual concern and also to create a sense of direction for the school as a whole. Within the leadership team there will be a team culture which reflects values. Values that cause the leader to hold on to a mainly hierarchical approach or to a consensual approach to decision making are unlikely to result in a team culture that fosters creativity (Wallace & Hall, 1994). Similarly if the leadership team value, for example, an approach that stresses the importance

of educational 'inclusion', but the staff see only problems and an increased workload, then an output that the leadership team perceive to have high quality may be perceived by the staff as being of low quality. Consonant values everywhere therefore can improve leadership functioning by engendering a team culture that fosters creativity, enhances synergy and increases the likelihood of the acceptance of the school's direction. Equally, conflicting values may affect perceived judgements about effectiveness and, within the leadership team, while team member complementarity enhances team working, conflicting values may be destructive (Adair, 1986). In his consideration of distributed leadership, Spillane (2006) illustrates this latter point powerfully through reference to one of his case schools (p68-70).

To know how the working of the leadership team will impact upon its members and the school as a whole, it is necessary to appreciate the importance of the relationship between structure, roles and relationships, and values and beliefs (Chrispeels & Martin, 2002). The importance of this is not only for those wishing to manage change (Chrispeels & Martin, 2002), but also for a leader entering new to a school (Wallace & Hall, 1994). In such circumstances awareness and management of potential values-conflict is important. These problems and their management can make or break the leadership team with the result ranging from a strong sense of working together with the staff to open conflict.

Values have arisen more than once in this discussion, but what is not clear is what a value is. Unfortunately, as Richmon (2004) puts it: "there is no broad agreement as to what values actually are". Even so, within the area of education the work of Hodgkinson (1978) has been very influential (but not uncriticised (Begley, 1999)). Based on the work of Kluckhohn (1951) he proposed a definition which could be stated very briefly as a conception of the desirable which influences action, or even more briefly as "concepts of the desirable"

(Hodgkinson, 1999, p7). He went further to suggest a tiered model of values (table 2.3.4 - adapted from Haydon (2007, p11) to reflect Hodgkinson's "Types of Value" (Hodgkinson, 1991, p97))

Hodgkinson's categories of values:		
Type 3	No rational basis (transrational): fundamental beliefs	
Type 2	Rational basis: values based in	i) consensus ii) consequences
Type 1	No rational basis (subrational): values based on preferences	

**Table 2.3.4: Hodgkinson's (1991) tiered model of values (adapted from Haydon (2007), p11)**

Throughout this study the values being considered are those that are rational and those that are transrational. It is not possible, however, without considering specific examples, to determine whether values-conflict concerns rational or transrational values, but one might suspect that where value-conflict centres on transrational values, the possibility of compromise may be slight.

In the manner of Wallace (2002, p182) one might put forward a speculative link between the degree of values consonance between the members of the SLT and the staff as a whole and the quality of the information flow between the two groups (fig. 2.3.4). The values in question would be types 2 and 3 and what is meant by 'quality of information' would be determined by the staff and would include open, supportive and democratic, and adequate (De Nobile & McCormick, 2008b).

What the framework stresses is the need of the leadership team to ensure that there are effective mechanisms for information flow between the staff as a whole and themselves and that the information that is received is not distorted (what is received is what was intended to be received) and also that the information provided meets the needs of the staff. Implicit here is an acceptance that people are social beings with a history, therefore the way in which messages are received and interpreted will be influenced by the previous relationship between the individual and the leader or leadership team and also previous relationships and experiences, direct or otherwise, with others in a leadership position.

<i>Degree of values-consonance</i>	High	<b>COLD</b> LT distant “being done to” Secretive Outputs approved Suspicion	<b>CONCORD</b> LT trusted “working with” Open Outputs approved Harmony
	Low	<b>CONFLICT</b> LT distrusted “them and us” Secrete conclave Outputs rejected Open conflict	<b>CONDEMNED</b> LT acknowledged “listening, but not hearing” Showing ‘warts and all’ Outputs rejected Disbelief
		Low	High

*Quality of Information Flow*

**Fig. 2.3.4: Speculative link between SLT-Staff values-consonance and information flow, in the manner of Wallace (2002, p182)**

Perhaps what is underlying much of the discussion to date is the importance of trust in the creation of shared understandings in what are often complex professional and social communities (Butt & Lance, 2005). In an educational environment that many see as increasingly managerialist (Day *et al*, 2000) and prone to rapid change (Butt & Lance, 2005), this issue of trust grows in importance, but what is meant by ‘trust’?

### 2.4.5 Trust

In their multi-disciplinary analysis of the nature of trust, Tschannen-Moran & Hoy (2000) saw that a problem was the sheer quantity of definitions of the term ‘trust’, however, they found that a key facet was the willingness to risk vulnerability. This study led to the definition of ‘faculty trust’ as “a party’s willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the confidence that the latter party is benevolent, honest, open, reliable and competent” (Tschannen-Moran, 2009, p233). Key to trust is whether a position-holder behaves in the manner that the observer would expect of that position-holder (Maele & Houtte, 2012; Bryk & Schneider, 2003). It follows that “people make trust judgements in part on the basis of shared values” (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000, p560; Tschannen-Moran, 2004, p45). Given this, it is not surprising that a teacher’s trust is developed when the “behaviours and attitudes of a post-holder or group meet the expectations of the teacher” (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999, p881).

Studies into trust in schools have ranged over all school phases of education and in several countries, but with similar points being made. In their study of a set of Chinese schools, Yin, *et al* (2013) observed that there were higher levels of trust amongst teachers who “perceived that they were empowered in their work environment” (p16), the very point made by Moye & Henkin (2005) in their study of American urban elementary schools. Hoy & Smith (2003), in their study of American high schools, observed that “leaders who are open with teachers, treat them as colleagues ... are rewarded with their trust” (p47). In their study of Flemish secondary schools, Maele & Houtte (2012) found that there was a positive relationship between trust and teacher job satisfaction, commenting that “the quality of teachers’ social

relationships in school informs the level of satisfaction experienced” (p885), thereby underscoring the social dimension of teaching.

The comment on the importance of relationships (Maele & Houtte, 2012) is in line with the approach of Bryk & Schneider (2003) in their study of American elementary schools. They observed that “a complex web of social exchanges conditions the basic operations of schools” (p20) and that “a set of mutual dependencies among all key actors” (p20) were embedded in the routines of a school. They saw trust as growing over time “through the exchanges” (p137) as expectations are validated by actions. For them, therefore, relationships are central (also suggested by Crawford, 2007a & 2007b), hence their concentration on ‘relational trust’ – “relational trust is forged in daily social exchanges” (p137). One caveat of Maele & Houtte (2012) linked to trust, that may limit the relatability of the outcomes of this study to schools in different circumstances, is that trust may be “fragile” (p887) in schools with particular student combinations “such as a high proportion of boys or of students with low socio-economic status” (p887).

### **2.3.6 Culture**

Within the sub-text of this literature review is the idea of school ‘culture’, a term that is often used interchangeably with climate and ethos (Glover & Coleman, 2005). Therein is part of the difficulty with ‘culture’, for as Lumby (2012) puts it, “we cannot agree what we are talking about” (p578), as a result of which some have suggested abandoning the concept and yet others have suggested the whole concept, whatever it is, is outmoded (Lumby 2012). Even so, Glover & Coleman’s (2005) literature review suggested that the term ‘climate’

places greater emphasis on the use of measurement (a view endorsed by Haydon (2007)), with 'ethos' being "general features of the atmosphere of the school" (p260). As for culture, Lumby & Foskett (2008) have referred to it as "a set of beliefs, values and behaviour, both explicit and implicit, which underpin an organisation and provide the basis for action and decision-making" (p3), which is not so far from Deal & Kennedy's (1988) "cohesion of values, myths, heros and symbols" (p4) or the "norms, values, rituals and climate" of MacNiel *et al* (2009, p75). Within any organisation there will be the dominant culture and sub-cultures (Stoll, 1998; Bell & Kent, 2010), although Busher *et al* (2007) prefer the term micro-cultures to sub-cultures because "the culture its members construct is semi-autonomous and not just a subset of the school's organisational culture" (p408). Deal & Kennedy (1988) remind us that values are the "bedrock" (p21) of any culture given which it is not surprising that where there are strong sub-cultures conflict may arise (Marshall, 1991; Stoll 1998), although Marshall (1991) does suggest that micro-politics works often to avoid such conflict. If the conflict is centred on values that the headteacher regards as transrational (Hodgkinson, 1991), then the headteacher may feel the need to change the culture or an aspect thereof, but Schein (2011) points out to us that such a thing is easier said than done and takes time (Glover & Coleman, 2005; Bell & Kent, 2010).

Engels *et al* (2008) remind us that the headteacher can have a significant influence on school culture simply by means of their leadership style, preferring the principal who is an "educational leader" (p161) who is "concerned about pupils' well-being at school, and devotes a considerable amount of time to innovation in education, teaching methods, a policy on counselling of pupils, etc" (reminiscent of 'pedagogical leadership' (Sergiovanni, 1998)). Devos (2000) (cited in Engels *et al* (2008)) suggests that there is a positive relationship



between educational leaders and positive school cultures. Rhodes *et al* (2011) argue that such cultures “encourage behaviours associated with ... relational trust” (p83) , thereby stressing the importance of the daily interactions between the members of the school community and in particular the teachers and the headteacher (Bryk & Schneider, 2003).

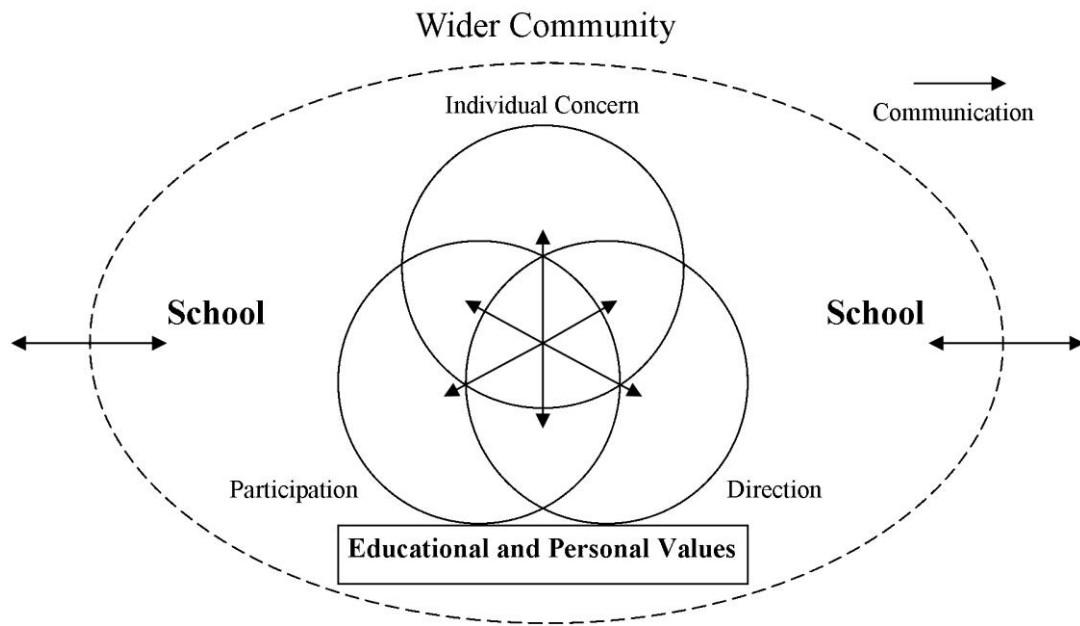
## **2.4 A Synthesis**

The thematic discussion has centred upon three areas: participation, individual concern and direction, which are placed in the context of communication, trust and culture. They are interconnected in that it is through participation that a shared vision and hence enhanced direction is developed, which also helps to cement a sense of community centred on individual concern and shared endeavour. Achieving this outcome is helped by an effective strategy for communication. Lines of communication, however, are only as good as their weakest line, which in turn is impacted by the culture of the school and the degree of trust between its members. While strength in many areas may help to develop credit in the form of goodwill and trust, those weaker aspects of communication result in an element of debit and a reduction in goodwill and trust. It is possible that by design some lines of communication are limited and therefore the costs that may be incurred as a result are deemed acceptable. This limitation in the communication may reflect policy which is underpinned by a value – this may irritate others but be accepted. Worse is the case where there is no awareness of the weakness, or where unrealised weakness is brought to the leader’s attention and no remediation or at least acknowledgment is noticed, for the perception may then be one of callousness or not caring, which is at the cost of ‘individual concern’.

But what does all this say in respect of what, in relation to their headteachers and leadership teams, would make teachers more satisfied in their work and thereby improve student results? The analysis suggests four aspects that may influence teacher satisfaction and therefore teacher perception of the leadership team, which can be represented diagrammatically (fig. 2.4). These areas are:

- a participative approach to policy formation, vision creation and decision making (represented by the ‘Participation’ circle in fig. 2.4);
- a sense that the individual matters to the leadership, both personally and professionally and is supported (represented by the ‘Individual Concern’ circle in fig. 2.4);
- a sense of direction for the school that is underpinned by educational and personal values (represented by the ‘Direction’ circle in fig. 2.4);
- lines of communication, both formal and informal, that help to remove barriers (represented by the arrows in fig. 2.4).

The latter may be regarded as analogous to the glue that holds it all together and without which the whole is unlikely to be sustained. The ‘glue’ of communication can also expose weaknesses, because it opens the system to close scrutiny, and can be abused where there is values-dissonance (fig. 2.3.4). Management of that information flow needs to be dynamic, since the relationships between various parts of the school will not be static.



**Fig. 2.4: High-level ‘Ideal Headteacher’ model**

Fig. 2.4 is high-level in that it does not provide detail, but an overview. As such it provides a headteacher with considerable latitude for individuality to be expressed. What it does not attempt to show, however, are the situational specifics of any school, where there may be values dissonance, which may underlie areas of conflict. Nor does it attempt to show that the very individuality that it permits could lead to issues of trust because staff expectations of their headteacher are not met.

Fig. 2.4 reflects this three pronged view, with communication acting as a dynamic glue that helps to hold the structure together. This would be underpinned by values which may themselves be the source of conflict linked to professional identity (Busher, 2005) and professionalism orientation (Evans, 2000) – for not everyone in a school community welcomes the process and presence of change. For the leadership team there may be some situations where the individual’s ‘ideal job’ (Evans, 1998) is so far removed from the espoused

educational ideologies and values that underpin the school's vision and direction, that any resulting dissonance is seen as an acceptable cost.

There is an important aspect that is missing from this discussion, although it has been referred to in passing earlier, namely the ability of the school's leadership to manage the school's interface between Dinham & Scott's (1998) second and third domains – the interface of the school with the outside world (a broader interpretation of Dinham & Scott's (1998) second domain), particularly but not exclusively the wider educational community. It is the management of that interface that may mean the school is able to provide more and better resources for staff and students. As such it may help to make a difference both to the career development of the staff and the educational opportunities provided for the students. Helping to create the awareness of the school's interface with the wider world through participative practices reduces the likely development of a "credibility gap" (Wallace & Hall, 1994, p131) and enhances understanding of the school's wider context. At the same time, it ensures an awareness of how good leadership and management of that interface can bring more resources to the school. This is another aspect of the management of information flow and, for those staff with an extended professionalism orientation, it may provide access to further development.

## 2.5 Additional Links to the Literature on Leadership

### 2.5.1 Further Reflections on Leadership

Reflecting on fig. 2.4, the stress given to individual concern, participation and direction may remind one of transformational leadership, as may the CONCORD quadrant of the speculative link shown in fig. 2.3.4. Northouse (2004) suggests that the idea of transformational leadership emerged from a recognition that concentrating upon systems and structures was insufficient to stimulate improvement (Day *et al*, 2000) and that what was needed was a process within which “leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation” (Burns, 1978, p20), this requiring a focus on individuals. As such it is concerned with “emotions, values, ethics, standards and long-term goals” (Northouse, 2004, p169) with an emphasis on “treating [colleagues] as human beings” (p169).

There have been many formulations of transformational leadership, for example Leithwood *et al*. (1999, p39) considered it to possess four dimensions:

- Setting directions (includes vision building, goal consensus and the development of high performance expectations)
- Developing people (includes the provision of individualised support, intellectual stimulation and the modelling of values important to the mission of the school)
- Organising (culture building in which colleagues are motivated by moral imperatives and structuring, fostering shared decision-making processes and problem-solving capacities)
- Building relationships with the school community

There is a high degree of congruence here with Terrell (1997) who provided a long list of what middle leaders look for in leaders, including: a vision that can be shared, care for people, supporting the development and participation of others, and valuing people, plus charisma.

Building upon Burns (1978) work, Bass (1985) accepted the link to House's (1976) work on charismatic leadership and suggested that charisma was a necessary but not sufficient condition for transformational leadership. However, the foregoing analysis did not suggest the need for charisma and Fullan (2003a) has suggested that charisma is negatively correlated with sustainability. Northouse (2004) has commented that transformational leadership encompasses a range of styles and this has led to the criticism that it lacks any conceptual clarity. Perhaps more closely allied is "values-led contingency leadership" (Day *et al*, 2000, p171), which places an emphasis on: values and vision, integrity (suggested by Davis (2012) as "the most significant factor in job satisfaction" (p78)), context (in which the leader is highly responsive to the demands and challenges within and beyond the school context – suggesting work with Dinham & Scott's (1998) domains 2 and 3), professional development in its widest sense, and the development of the self through reflexive activity, both of the latter supported by a participative approach. There is also a link to Sergiovanni's (1998) pedagogical leadership, with its focus on social, academic, intellectual and professional capital, although in Sergiovanni's case this is achieved through 'communities of practice' and does not anticipate a charismatic leader.

The message of Dinham & Scott's (2000) domains theory (fig. 2.2) would suggest that the context both within and external to a school is very important with regard to teacher job satisfaction and motivation. Equally the message from the work of Evans (1997) suggests

that social context is important, since job satisfaction and motivation link to the degree of values consonance of the leader and follower and also the teacher's professionalism orientation. This implies that the social context needs to be taken into account when considering leadership. In his work on distributed leadership (a term that itself has attracted many interpretations (Harris, 2003; Arrowsmith, 2007), Spillane (2004) has identified that "leadership takes place in the interactions of people and their situation" (p1). He goes on to state that "from a distributed perspective, tools and organisational routines along with other aspects of a situation ... contribute to defining the [leadership] practice in much the same way as the actions of different leaders and followers do" (p4). This suggests that in some way, leadership is a social construction of three mutually interacting parties: leader, follower and situation, where 'situation' may be both of the past and of the present (perhaps a hint here of rituals and the idea of leadership *is* performance (Peck *et al*, 2009; Rhodes, 2012)). As such, espoused practices are not sufficient to understand leadership practice in a situation by itself, rather it is necessary to ask both leaders and followers about actual practice and, where possible, to observe that practice.

### **2.5.2 Middle Leaders, Professional Identity and Self-Efficacy**

Even as long ago as 1992, Smylie's (1992) research suggested that for teachers participation in decision making is likely to improve job satisfaction and their loyalty to their school, although the teacher would wish to be selective about the decisions in which they participated. He also pointed out that central to that willingness was the relationship of the teachers to their headteacher (a view endorsed by Honinge & Hooge (2014)) – positive engagement being more likely if the relationship was "open, collaborative, facilitative and supportive" (p61).

Brown *et al* (1999) also emphasised the importance of relationships, adding that for “heads of department” (p328) there was the desire to see the use of distributed leadership, with the greater degree of participation that that would imply. “heads of department” has been highlighted because it illustrates the emphasis of much of the research into secondary school middle leaders on academic subject leadership, rather than those middle leaders with other responsibilities. Indeed Wise & Bush (1999) define secondary middle leaders as “those specialists who are responsible for an aspect of the academic curriculum” (p184). This is an emphasis that is often implied in other studies of middle leaders in schools. Whilst acknowledging this bias in the literature, by virtue of their position in the hierarchy of a school (if only because their position means that they are more likely to be involved in liaison with senior leaders through the formal meetings structure of the school), subject leaders are more likely to be significantly involved in participative activity. Whilst this is unfair on those middle leaders working in other areas, it is likely to reflect the majority of middle leaders in selective secondary schools and therefore the points these studies make deserve consideration.

Busher (2005) points out that teaching expertise in a middle leader is “essential for being regarded as effective by his or her colleagues” (p147). In view of this and the likely career path of academic middle leaders, it is perhaps not surprising that they should seek to identify with their teachers rather than as part of the management or leadership of the school (Busher, 2005). Indeed in a study by Wise & Bush (1999) 59% of middle managers (by which subject leaders was meant) felt that the most influential group on their decisions were the departmental staff, with only 22% feeling it was the headteacher and/or the senior management team. Yet at the same time, their senior colleagues perceived middle leaders to be as one of themselves (Busher, 2005). They were seen as agents for the senior leadership



team, but also “advocates for their colleagues views to the senior leadership team” (p145) and as protectors of their subject areas “against possible predation” (Bennett *et al*, 2007, p462). The scope for role conflict, even inter-personal conflict (Turner, 2003) is considerable, particularly for the middle leader who feels unsettled or uncertain in their departmental leadership (Bennett *et al*, 2007). It would be unwise however to think that this could not change, for Beijaard *et al* (2004) remind us that professional identity is dynamic and a “relational phenomenon” (p108), in which case a headteacher for whom relationships are central (given their link to trust (Bryk & Schneider (2003), this is not unlikely) may help to bring about that change. In addition Wise & Bush (1999) found that over a period of time change had been brought about in the approach of middle leaders to departmental monitoring, although that may be due to the pressures of managerialism as much as developmental or relational processes in the middle leaders’ schools.

Conflict can come from the differing expectations of the groups that the middle leader serves, but conflict can also come from the values they bring with them to those groups. Busher (2005) has suggested that apart from family backgrounds, these values can come from “teachers with whom they had worked as students when at school themselves, or in higher education and from teachers with whom they had worked early in their careers” (p141). It is because of this, that Busher *et al* (2007) suggest that a leader should first make their own values explicit, then consider the values of others and use dialogue to avoid value-conflict. For a middle leader leading a department (or another aspect of a school) that may sometimes be feasible, but for a school leader working with the middle leaders the scope may be less, due to the number of middle leaders as much as the desire to stamp her/his own approach on the school. In this situation it is incumbent on the school leaders to help the middle leaders to

assimilate new ideas and values through acculturation, leading to their actuation, a process that may be helped by coaching and mentoring (Rhodes & Fletcher, 2013).

For a new headteacher, who has yet to build the relationships that help generate trust, there may be an imperative for change. Therein lies potential for conflict, for change may be perceived as a threat for at least two reasons. The first is that it can strike at the very sense of how teachers perceive themselves – their professional identity, their individual answers to the question of “What does it mean for me to be a teacher in this school?” (Beijaard *et al*, 2004). In effect it can be perceived as a challenge to the question “Who am I?” Engels *et al* (2004) also suggest that teachers are active in the creation and development of their professional identity, which means there is a sense of agency, which imposed change can reduce, at least in the area affected by the change. The change can impact at the teacher’s sense of self-efficacy, by implying a judgment of her/his ability to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Tschannen-Moran & Hoy (2001) have suggested that the self-efficacy of teachers has three dimensions (efficacy for: student engagement, instructional strategies, classroom management) any of which may be impacted by potential change, with that impact possibly being negative, thereby reducing a teacher’s enthusiasm and commitment for teaching (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). With the current managerialist climate of education, the change may equally have been imposed from outside of the school, with possible concomitant impact upon the headteacher’s professional identity and self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004; Federici & Skaalvik, 2011).

### 2.5.3 The Impact on the Headteacher

Lumby & English (2009) suggest that “a leader is one who has many faces and chooses to present the face or faces which will be appropriate ... What may remain more constant are the values, although they may stretch to a small degree, rather like elastic, to accommodate changing context” (p.111). Within a context of leadership configurations (Gronn, 2009) and the model of fig. 2.4, this may be all the more true, although if ‘core values’ equate to transrational (Hodgkinson, 1991) values, one may question the scope for elasticity. In relation to fig. 2.4, there can be little doubt that ‘individual concern’ requires high-level interpersonal skills, skills that need to be deployed no matter how the headteacher may be feeling at the time. Equally, the need to adopt many ‘faces’, perhaps sometimes in rapid succession, highlights the degree to which the role of the headteacher includes elements of performance (Peck *et al*, 2009), which can have both a positive and a negative effect on the headteacher (Crawford, 2007b). In such a context Rhodes & Greenway’s (2010) questions “concerning the ability to lead others without having a deep understanding of oneself and how far from one’s true ‘self’ one can reasonably deviate in performing headship” (p152) are very pertinent. Implicit is the need not only for strong inter-personal skills, but also strong intra-personal skills.

It would seem that high level affective skills are called for, which Anderson *et al* (2001), in their updating of Bloom’s (1956, 1965) taxonomies of cognitive and affective educational objectives, suggest requires high level cognitive skills as well. Indeed they argue that any such division between the cognitive and the affective domains is difficult to sustain.

An alternative to such taxonomies can be found in the concept of emotional intelligence, or the related personal intelligences proposed in Gardner's (1983, 1999) theory of multiple intelligences. The proposed personal intelligences are: inter-personal intelligence and intra-personal intelligence. Of the former Gardner (1983) says that it 'turns outwards, to the other individual' (p239) adding:

"The core capacity here is the *ability to notice and make distinctions among other individuals* and in particular, among their moods, temperaments, motivations and intentions." (Gardner, 1983, p239)

Of the latter, he says that it concerns:

"the development of the internal aspects of a person. The core capacity at work here is *access to one's own feeling life* - one's range of affects or emotions: the capacity instantly to effect discriminations among these feelings and, eventually, to label them, to enmesh them in symbolic codes, to draw upon them as a means of understanding and guiding one's behaviour." (Gardner, 1983, p239)

These two 'intelligences' have been conflated and expanded into the broader concept of 'emotional intelligence', Salovey & Meyer (1990) being one of the first to do so and perhaps Goleman (1996) being the most well known exponent. Of emotional intelligence, Mayer & Salovey (1993) suggest that:

"Emotionally intelligent individuals may be more aware of their own feelings and those of others. They may be more open to positive and negative aspects of internal experience, better able to label them, and when appropriate, communicate them. Such awareness will lead to the effective regulation of affect within themselves and others." (Mayer & Salovey, 1993, p440)

This would seem to encompass Gardner's (1983) personal intelligences, but there is no standard definition of emotional intelligence, with disagreements between the many contributors to the field, including Mayer & Salovey (1993) and Goleman (1996).

Neither multiple intelligence theory nor emotional intelligence theory have been without criticism and considerable debate (Mayer & Salovey, 1993; Goleman, 1996; Gardner, 1999; Mayer, *et al*, 2004; Gardner, 2006; Gardner & Moran, 2006; Schaler, 2006; Visser *et al*, 2006a; Visser *et al*, 2006b; Waterhouse, 2006; Almeida *et al*, 2010). Because of the debate about what is or is not emotional intelligence, whether it is a valid construct or indeed whether it is an ‘intelligence’, the term ‘emotional intelligence’ will not usually be used in this study. Equally, because of the debate as to whether the personal intelligences may be ‘intelligences’ or personality traits or some other constructs (Gardner & Moran, 2006; Waterhouse, 2006), the terms inter-personal skills and intra-personal skills will usually be used. This would be in line with Gardner’s (1999) observation that good leaders display “strong interpersonal skills” and “they have a good intrapersonal sense” (p128).

Rhodes & Greenway (2010) and Crawford (2007a, 2007b) have both considered the impact of such an environment upon a headteacher from within the context of primary schools. While in the usually smaller primary schools, with their (usually) smaller staff teams in closer and more consistent proximity to each other, it may mean that the inter-personal and emotional issues could be more intense, it does not mean that they do not exist in the (usually) larger secondary school. Indeed the larger number of people with whom the headteacher needs to interact and the likely greater complexity of the organisation may bring additional issues of their own, not the least being the likely need for more ‘faces’ (Lumby & English, 2009) and the greater potential for values-dissonance. Crawford (2007a) suggests that the need to simulate or to suppress feelings in order to “maintain a specific outward appearance, or in order to produce the required emotional state in others” (p90) constitutes an ‘emotional labour’ which can lead to stress. Indeed Rhodes & Greenway (2010) report that headteachers

identified a variety of emotional costs, with very little positive to outweigh this. In such a context, how do headteachers learn to cope? Rhodes & Greenway (2010) suggest that the answer may lie in the stage theories of leadership careers (Gronn, 1993; Day & Bakioğlu, 1996; Weindling, 1999; Ribbins, 2003). They also question as to whether more can be done to help in the identification of potential headteachers (Rhodes *et al*, 2008) and how headteachers can be helped to find strategies to deal with the demands of the post (Rhodes & Fletcher, 2013), the latter centred upon acculturation, assimilation and actualisation, perhaps through coaching and mentoring, although other professional socialisation (Merton, 1963) processes may be appropriate.

## **2.5 Summary**

Teacher job satisfaction was used as an initial means to access literature relevant to the research questions – headteacher and teacher conceptualisations of leadership, and the making of judgments on a headteacher's leadership. While the literature would argue for a degree of caution in applying the outcomes of studies in this field to one's own context, it also suggested it could prove useful. Dinham & Scott's (1998) domain model suggested a focus on domain 3, the school based factors that could be causes of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Studies by Evans (1997, 2000, 2001) proved useful in identifying key aspects of leadership which could help to engender job satisfaction: individual concern, participation and direction.

To broaden the base, further papers were explored which helped to cement these three issues as being a proto-framework for the study. Caution, however, was called for by De Nobile &

McCormick (2008b) that it is equally important to ensure that communication strategies worked well for the school, for communication can be a cause for dissatisfaction in many schools (Butt *et al*, 2005). Three additional concepts proved to be important: values (“concepts of the desirable” (Hodgkinson, 1999, p7)); trust, with its emphasis on shared values (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000) and relationships (Bryk & Schneider, 2003, 2004); and culture with its bedrock of values (Deal & Kennedy, 1988) and, in particular, positive school culture and its implications for school leadership (Engels *et al*, 2008; Rhodes *et al*, 2011). These ideas were synthesised into a model of the ‘Desired Headteacher’ (fig. 2.4). In considering theories of leadership, it was seen that no particular theory was foregrounded by the model, but that it appeared to have links to several, including transformational (Leithwood *et al*, 1999), servant (Greenleaf, 1970), values-led contingent (Day *et al*, 2000), pedagogical (Sergiovanni, 1998) and teacher-centred (Evans, 1998) leadership. Perhaps of greatest pertinence is the link to Gronn’s (2009) hybrid leadership. The concept implicit to these theories, that leadership lies within the triad of leader, follower and context, suggests that the idea of leadership as ‘performance’ (Lumby & English, 2009; Peck *et al*, 2009; Peck & Dickinson, 2010; Rhodes & Greenway, 2010) may provide a useful perspective.

The centrality of participation in fig. 2.4 places an emphasis on the role of the middle leader as a key player in the model. This raises questions of professional identity (Beijaard *et al*, 2004; Busher *et al*, 2007)) and of potential conflict for middle leaders and others who may be called on not only to participate, but also to join with senior leaders in accepting responsibility for the outcomes of that participatory activity (Turner, 2003). The potential for conflict lies not only within the participants, but between the advocates of change and those impacted by the change, for that change may be seen as a challenge to a teacher’s professional identity, a

challenge to their values system (Busher *et al*, 2007), a reduction to a teacher's locus of control (Judge & Bono, 2001) and a reduced sense of self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001; Kurt *et al*, 2012), which can also result in reduced job satisfaction (Canrinus, 2012). Possible approaches to helping middle leaders (and perhaps others) with some of these issues were suggested by Rhodes & Fletcher (2013).

The need to focus on the individual implied by 'individual concern', the strong focus on relationships and openness in order to generate trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2003), the need for flexibility of response implicit in hybrid approaches to leadership (Gronn, 2009) and the flexibility of structures that help engender a positive school culture (Engels *et al*, 2008) within a context of change (which could be externally mandated) and possible resulting conflict places a strong emphasis on the headteacher's inter- and intra-personal skills (Schneider & Burton, 2008). Equally it can place a significant strain on the headteacher (Crawford, 2007a) and entail heavy emotional costs with little outweighing those costs (Rhodes & Greenway, 2010), leading Rhodes & Fletcher (2013) to call for effective strategies to help headteachers meet these challenges.



## **CHAPTER 3: DESIGN & METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Sadovnik (2004, p13) reminds us that “the social self is an active product of human agency rather than a deterministic product.” Perhaps this is a reason why some of the studies, particularly quantitative studies, provide outcomes that are at variance with others – the setting is important, for as Tyler (1988) points out, a school is a complex web of social and other interactions. Busher (2005), when exploring middle leader professional identities, comments that “their reflections on their experiences at school and university has shaped their view of successful teaching” (p142), thereby stressing the importance of earlier experiences and not just a teacher’s current setting. Such a deep sociological setting may suggest that the greater flexibility of a qualitative approach is a preferable alternative to the more restrictive approach of a quantitative study, if one is to strive to understand headteacher and teacher conceptualisations of leadership and teacher perceptions of their headteachers’ leadership.

### **3.2 Wider Frameworks**

Wallace & Poulson (2003) have proposed “five intellectual projects for studying aspects of the social world” (p24), as such they have generated a framework that helps one to place a study within a field. The five ‘projects’ are:

- Knowledge-for-understanding
- Knowledge-for-critical-evaluation
- Knowledge-for-action

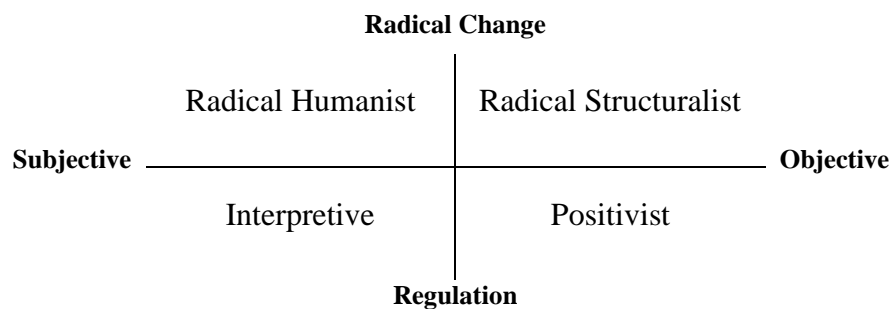
- Instrumentalism
- Reflexive action

The research questions may suggest one of two relevant ‘projects’, namely knowledge-for-understanding and knowledge-for-action, but they do not preclude the possibility of knowledge-for-critical-action, which could be emancipatory in its intent. The study does not, however, seek to answer the question “What is wrong with what happens and why” (p24) (appropriate for knowledge-for-critical-action), rather it seeks to understand, amongst other things, teachers’ judgments of their headteachers’ leadership, thereby placing it firmly with Habermas’ (1971) Practical Interest and suggestive of an interpretive paradigm. If that were the sole intent it would sit firmly in the knowledge-for-understanding project, representing a disinterested stance towards practice, but that is not the sole intention. It is not concerned simply with knowledge for its own sake, but with knowledge that can be utilised, and to use the gained knowledge to generate recommendations for future actions that may lead to improved practice - knowledge-for-action. Even if the aim cannot be realised fully, it would be hoped that at the very least recommendations can be made for further study that could lead to subsequent improvements in practice. It follows that the audience is not only researchers and academics, but also practitioners.

### **3.3 Philosophical Approach**

In their mapping of research paradigms, Burrell & Morgan (1985) have identified two discrete dimensions (fig. 3.3) with which to analyse the approaches and assumptions which underpin

paradigms. The first relates to the nature of science and forms the subjective–objective dimension. The second relates to the nature of society and forms the regulation–radical change dimension. ‘Regulation’ refers to the sociology of regulation, which attempts to explain why society “tends to hold together rather than fall apart” (Burrell & Morgan, 1985, p17). ‘Radical change’ refers to the sociology of radical change, which “is essentially concerned with man’s emancipation from the structures which limit and stunt his potential for development” (Burrell & Morgan, 1985, p17). Emancipation is not, however, the aim of the study, suggesting either a positivist or an interpretive paradigm be adopted



**Fig. 3.3: Four paradigms for the analysis of social theory, slightly modified from Burrell & Morgan (1985, p22)**

Viewed from the positivist paradigm the social world is generalisable, however it has been suggested that such generalisations developed from that paradigm are either truisms or too general (Usher, 1996). The reasons for this lie in the ontological assumptions of the natural world, namely that it is orderly, lawful and ultimately predictable. The social world with its processes and phenomena, by contrast, is usually seen as being open and indeterminate, therefore the controlled experiment that is undertaken in the natural world cannot be undertaken in the social world. Indeed the social world can only be understood from the standpoint of participants of the social action being investigated, where reality for the individual is socially constructed and to understand that reality one needs to understand how it

is being constructed. This view is consistent with the ontological and epistemological assumptions of the interpretive paradigm.

The social science researcher seeks to make sense of what is being researched usually through interpretive frameworks, as efforts are made to impute and understand the meanings attributed by the individual. Thus, unlike the natural sciences, the researcher (subject) and the researched (object) are both acting as interpreters trying to make sense of social interaction – the ‘double hermeneutic’ (Usher, 1996), in that there is a double sense making process. As a result, the strict subject-object separation of positivism is potentially violated, along with the objectivity of the researcher. It is necessary, therefore, for the researcher to be aware of the ways one’s own social identity and background has an impact on the research, a process called reflexivity.

Within the context of this investigation, the assumptions behind the interpretive paradigm seem secure. The investigation seeks to access individuals’ conceptualisations and judgments in relation to headteacher leadership. It accepts that people construct their own reality and that the reality so generated will be influenced by the experiences garnered over time and across settings, both directly and vicariously. It does not deny the possibility of an objective reality, but questions what that may be and whether it can be ever known, given that the intentions behind the actions of the originator may not match the perceptions of the recipient of those actions or even the perceptions of the casual observer. To fail to deny the possibility of an objective reality may suggest a post-positive element to the paradigm, but such could not be so for this study. In this study individual perception is everything, for example if an individual hears or sees something, that individual will interpret what has been seen and heard

on the basis of her or his own experiences, past or current, direct or vicarious. As such the reality is individual and socially constructed - it may be shared with some others or not, but either way it is real to the individual and may be the basis for their own actions. In such an ontological and epistemological setting, the interpretive paradigm is required.

### **3.4 Research strategy**

Within the interpretive paradigm the starting point is the individual and seeking to understand her/his interpretation of the phenomenon in question. If 'theory' is to emerge, it is from the data that is gathered, such 'theory' seeking to establish "sets of meanings which yield insight and understanding of people's behaviour" (Cohen *et al*, 2000, p23). The research strategy seeks to enable this.

#### **3.4.1 Methodology**

The study's initial aims require the generation of an outcome that has some degree of applicability even relatability (Bassey, 2001) to other contexts. One possible route is by means of a case study. Hitchcock & Hughes (1995, p317) suggest that the major characteristic of a case study is "the concentration upon a single incident", requiring the study of a phenomenon in context and undertaken using multiple methods. A problem with this is achieving any form of applicability to other contexts. One answer is the use of multiple case studies, however Robson (2002) suggests that the purpose of the multiple case study lies within a flexible research design that seeks to build upon the first study to complement it by

focussing on an area not originally covered. Timescale prevents such an extended approach for this study. In fact the concentrated and extended time required to conduct a single case study that meets the ‘hallmarks’ of a case study (Cohen *et al*, 2000, p182) is beyond the resources available. Fortunately Robson (2002) offers also a less purist idea suggesting that there is a sense in which every enquiry is a kind of case study, in that they take place at particular times, in particular places and with particular people, even though they may not use multiple methods. With this in mind, this study will centre upon a small set of non-sequential cases.

### **3.4.2 Methods**

While research in the interpretive paradigm does not preclude the possibility of quantitative data or the use of mixed methods (Johnson *et al*, 2007), the nature of the data to be gathered suggests that the primary research instrument needs to be capable of accessing attitudes, opinions, values and beliefs, suggesting the use of questionnaires and/or interviews.

Cohen *et al* (2000) suggest that the anonymity of a questionnaire and the lack of a face-to-face context may lead to better responses on sensitive issues than a face-to-face context. They also suggest that the nature of the data to be established and the use of a case study approach would suggest the use of a “qualitative, less structured, word-based and open-ended questionnaire” (p247). This, in turn, can lead to the problem of different respondents interpreting the questions and even the words in the questions differently, with the inability of the researcher to follow-up misunderstandings. While emphasising the need for careful design and piloting of any questionnaire schedule, the nature of the data to be gathered may

be considered by the respondent to be both sensitive and threatening, thereby increasing the potential bias and unreliability of the data gathering instrument (Cohen et al, 2000). This emphasises the need for the design of a questionnaire to be backed by a strong theoretical framework (Robson, 2002) that optimises as far as possible the capability of the instrument to gather the data sought.

King (1994) suggests that where individual perceptions are being sought or where historical accounts are required, then the most appropriate research instrument is an interview, which can be flexible, adaptable and provide access to non-verbal clues. Unfortunately, it is that very flexibility and the associated potential biases of both the respondent and the interviewer that results in issues with regard to reliability. The advantages of the interview lead to its disadvantages and stress the need for standardised procedures, the use of full transcripts, some form of triangulation and the avoidance of anecdotalism (Silverman, 2001). Cohen *et al* (2000) remind us that “the more one wishes to acquire unique, non-standardised, personalised information about how individuals view the world, the more one veers towards qualitative, open-ended, unstructured interviews” (p270). It follows that the instrument most susceptible to problems with reliability and validity is the most appropriate for this study. Silverman (2001 & 2005) has suggested ways in which this problem can be reduced through the use of three devices: constant comparative method, comprehensive data treatment, and deviant case analysis. This former implies an inductive process in which analysis of the data starts as soon as the first items have been collected, with emerging hypotheses being tested against the new data and possibly even being allowed to influence the interview schedule as it is used in subsequent interviews. In the light of this a semi-structured interview process was employed. While the intention was that the schedule should not be altered, a version of this was followed

in which new lines of enquiry suggested by answers from respondents early in the interviewing process were used with later respondents – an inductive process. Comprehensive data treatment says that all of the data should be analysed and not just those parts that agree with the emerging and subsequent hypothesis – this was accepted. The third approach was adopted, in that no data was excluded because it did not fit the majority, rather explanations for all cases needed to be found. The use of these strategies helped to remove anecdotalism and increase validity.

#### **3.4.2.1 Research Instrument**

The interview questions needed to be able to access the respondents' conceptualisations of leadership (RQ1 and RQ2). It is accepted that the respondents may have worked in the area of leadership at some point and therefore their conceptualisations may no-longer be "taken-for-granted" (Schutz, 1967, p.74) or implicit. Because the respondents may be more able to illustrate their meaning by examples rather than referring in the abstract, the questions needed to allow the respondents to provide examples. It was then necessary to try to access the respondent's perceptions of school leadership within their own school and to reflect upon the practice that had been seen (RQ3). Again, the respondent was encouraged to use specific examples to aid the understanding of what was meant, thereby enhancing the likelihood of understanding why the respondents think or behave as they do with regard to their school leaders.

By way of a pilot, the preliminary interview schedule was put to a senior TLR holder in the researcher's own school. The respondent was treated as an interviewee, but was asked to



reflect on the questions and then discuss them with the headteacher. The choice of the respondent was important, for the reflections needed to be truthful and not influenced by the power relationship that could be deemed to exist. The respondent was a free thinker and one with whom a healthy and robust relationship had been developed. As a result of this, several changes were made to the teacher's interview schedule.

Consideration of the modified school staff interview schedule and also discussion of the pilot schedule with the sole deputy at the researcher's school (again, a person with whom a robust relationship had been developed) led to the conclusion that with just a small number of changes it would also be appropriate for the headteachers. On the basis that the interview process itself would be inductive, further changes at the pre-interview stage were not deemed necessary.

#### **3.4.2.2 Interviewing**

The interview schedule was treated as a guide to ensure that key areas were covered with each interviewee, it was not treated as a straitjacket. The answers provided by the interviewees necessitated different rider questions. Equally the depth of the responses provided was variable. To some extent, therefore, the interviewees could exercise a degree of control of the process and it was by allowing this that some additional aspects arose and were subsequently explored with other interviewees, for example the characteristics desired of a headteacher and also the success criteria by which a headteacher might be judged – this inductive approach was used only early in the interviewing process. Each interviewee had been allotted 45 minutes, the length of the tape used for recording the interview. Some interviewees spoke at

great length and despite the best efforts of the interviewer it was sometimes difficult to ensure all aspects of the schedule were addressed. Equally, some interviewees were very succinct in their responses and were reluctant to be drawn further making it difficult to ensure a good depth of response. Care was exercised in all cases to ensure that any rider questions were not leading questions, but genuine attempts to tease out new information or seek clarification. The interviewer was very careful, therefore, not to imply any value judgement on what was being said, or to reveal any personal bias, both of which would have reduced the validity of the study. While the use of riders and giving some degree of control to the interviewees would mean that the process was not completely standardised and could be seen as a weakness, the sheer number of interview transcriptions, 31, meant that there was a rich seam of data being provided when taken overall. In addition, the openness of many of the responses, including some that were very critical of aspects of their own headteachers, would suggest that the staff were comfortable with the process.

The transcriptions were undertaken by the researcher and took as long as they required. After the initial transcribing was completed, subsequent checks were made against the tapes as a form of quality control, but also to help clarify areas of doubt. Even so, a small number of issues remained which could not be sorted out by reference to the tapes. This could be because of background noise, a quiet voice or a moment of indistinct articulation. As a second level of checking, each transcript was sent to the respondent concerned. This meant that errors in the transcription could be corrected, sections changed to fit with what had been intended and even parts or all of a transcription could be withdrawn. This degree of ownership of their individual transcriptions had been promised and was carried out. No interviewee withdrew as a result of reading their words, but there were a small number of

changes (all were typographic errors) made by some of them. Only the checked and modified transcriptions, where modifications were made, were used in the subsequent analysis.

### **3.4.3 Management**

The trustworthiness of qualitative research has been called into question chiefly by those of a positivist frame of mind (Silverman, 2001). One criticism concerns how the data is categorised and described so as to ensure a degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category (Hammersley, 1992) – an issue of reliability. A second criticism relates to the soundness of the explanations offered in the analysis – one such issue is known as anecdotalism, because only a few “telling examples” (Silverman, 2001, p34) of an apparent phenomenon are offered in a report with no or little attempt to analyse less clear data. Such a criticism questions the validity of the research. Avoiding such pitfalls is central to the management of the research project.

#### **3.4.3.1 Access and choice of schools**

The fact of the researcher being, at the time of data gathering, a headteacher within the sector that is the focus of the study increased the likelihood that access to four schools could be achieved, even so a fifth school was held in reserve should it be necessary to be approached, as proved to be the case. The use of this fifth school to replace a school that did not wish to be part of the study (because it had participated in other studies in the recent past) probably increased the range of settings of the schools and thereby may have increased the representative nature of the sample. The choice of schools, for which access could be

negotiated, was determined by the desire to have middle sized schools in order to increase the 'relatability' (Bassey, 2001). At the same time schools in more than one setting were sought, in order to increase the range of possible responses from the interviewees and the circumstances pertaining. By so doing, the intention was to generate a rich data-set for analysis. The resulting sample would be regarded as purposive (Silverman, 2005). Of the four schools that took part, two were city schools (one in an inner city area and one in a moderately leafy suburb) and two were situated in small rural towns. All four schools took students from a wide area and not just from the environs of the schools, it follows that many students travel a considerable distance to come to school. Entrance to all of the schools was by open competitive entrance examinations. Two of the headteachers knew each other, although there was no collaboration at school or department level on-going while the study was undertaken. At the time of the interviewing process two of the schools were rated by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) as 'very good' and two as 'outstanding'. All of the schools were between 700 and 800 students in size. In this thesis the schools are referred to as A, B, C and D, the letters holding no significance to any aspects of the schools.

### **3.4.3.2 Ethics**

An important question for consideration is that of responsibility – responsibility as it relates to the researcher, the participants in the research, school non-participants, the teaching community, the education research community and towards those individuals who may support the researcher (BERA, 2011). How one carries out those responsibilities is informed by one's values – one's beliefs, judgements and personal viewpoints - it is therefore a matter of ethics. The ethical ground rules that may be put in place influence the methods to be used

and the way in which they are used, they are therefore aspects of the design (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995).

Cohen *et al* (2000) have identified several variables that may influence how the ethical issues are addressed, these include: the age of the participants; the subject matter of the research (is it sensitive?); the aims of the research (could it be viewed as subversive?); are the researchers participators and collaborators; how are the results to be disseminated? The fact that for this study the participants are teachers means that certain issues such as voluntary informed consent are easier to ensure. However, the issue of sensitivity, when added to the specific nature of the context of some of the participants, means that participant anonymity is necessary – perhaps the perceptions and the influences on the perceptions may not be flattering to an individual. It is also possible that from a ‘radical change’ perspective, the aim of improving headteacher leadership identification, preparation, support and practice may be regarded as subversive of the rights of the worker!

Denscombe (2003) has identified three underlying ethical principles that were used to guide the study:

- **the interests of participants should be protected** – implying “a duty to consider in advance the likely consequences of participation and to take measures to safeguard the interests of those who help with the investigation” (Denscombe, 2003, p136), this entails ensuring participants do not come to physical, psychological or personal harm;
- **researchers should avoid deception and misrepresentation** – they are expected to be open and explicit about what they are doing, their intentions and to tell the truth

about the nature of the investigation and the role of the participants in the investigation;

- **participants should give voluntary informed consent** – there should be no sense of coercion and sufficient information should be provided to permit a reasoned judgement.

These principles were followed (including the ethical bullet points of section 1.4), with care taken to ensure that no personal harm should befall a participant as a result of a view expressed or observed in the course of the study. The necessitated five years leave of absence from the study (between the agreement of the interview transcripts with the interviewees and the start of the analysis of the transcripts) may have acted to reduce some of the ethical concerns. This is because by the time the analysis was started many of the staff, including headteachers, were no longer at the schools included in the study and therefore unintended detriment is even less likely. Equally school and interviewee circumstances have changed, therefore the likelihood of their identification based on what is reported was reduced to an even lower level.

### **3.4.3.3 Sample**

In this study the sample is at two levels: the choice of schools to be studied (see section 3.4.3.1) and the choice of participants within the school. Schools can be of very different sorts, which may be regarded as a reason for selecting a subset that is similar in some way, although to do so may reduce the extent of relatability, due to selection effects. Equally teaching and other staff work in different parts of the physical school, different subject areas

and different parts of the staffing hierarchy. Each of these aspects and others may affect the responses of the individuals. The most appropriate approach is to seek a purposive sample – a sample that addresses the question of “[g]iven what I already know ... who or what is likely to provide the best information” (Denscombe, 2003, p15). However the sample is selected, it is also likely to reflect accessibility. Pragmatism may also influence the size of the sample, following Silverman’s (2001) advice with regard to flexibility, so that if necessary the sample could be added to during the course of the study. In order to reduce any sense of threat to the leadership team and thereby increase the likelihood of school cooperation, the choice of teacher participants was given to the headteachers, although guidance was provided (see section 1.4). This may, however, reduce validity – headteachers may be more likely to choose staff with whom they work well, or who they see as less critical – that said, several criticisms of headteachers were made.

#### **3.4.3.3.1 Interviewees**

The interview process was undertaken between June and July 2007. Headteachers (HT) were asked to provide a mixture of Senior Leadership Team (SLT) members (usually Deputy Headteachers (DH) and Assistant Headteachers (AH)), Teaching and Learning Responsibility (TLR) holders (TLRs are split between TLR1 and TLR2, with TLR1 being the more highly paid) and main scale (MS) teachers (see section 1.4). In two schools the most senior non-teacher (SNT) was included in the set of interviewees. Schools were encouraged to do this, but only two chose to do so. Both of the SNTs in the study were part of the SLT and in one case the SNT was designated as Assistant Head (Business and Finance). In one school a TLR1 post-holder was a permanent member of the SLT and was therefore treated as being in

the SLT group, rather than the TLR group. All of the teachers were teacher trained and three of the four headteachers had been awarded the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH), although the study predated the requirement for this qualification. One of the SNTs was studying for the NPQH at the time of the study. The breakdown of the interviewees is recorded in table 3.4.3.3.1

<b>School</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Code</b>
A	HT	HT	A-HT
A	SLT	DH	A-DH
A	SLT	Bursar	A-SNT
A	TLR	TLR2	A-TLR2
A	MS	MS	A-MSa
A	MS	MS	A-MSb
B	HT	HT	B-HT
B	SLT	AH	B-AH
B	SLT	TLR1	B-SLT
B	TLR	TLR1	B-TLR1
B	TLR	TLR2	B-TLR2a
B	TLR	TLR2	B-TLR2b
B	MS	MS	B-MSa
B	MS	MS	B-MSb
C	HT	HT	C-HT
C	SLT	DH	C-DH
C	TLR	TLR1	C-TLR1
C	TLR	TLR2	C-TLR2a
C	TLR	TLR2	C-TLR2b
C	TLR	TLR2	C-TLR2c
C	MS	MS	C-MSa
C	MS	MS	C-MSb
D	HT	HT	D-HT
D	SLT	DH	D-DH
D	SLT	AH	D-SNT
D	TLR	TLR1	D-TLR1a
D	TLR	TLR1	D-TLR1b
D	TLR	TLR2	D-TLR2a
D	TLR	TLR2	D-TLR2b
D	MS	MS	D-MSa
D	MS	MS	D-MSb

**Table 3.4.3.3.1: Interviewees involved in this study**



#### **3.4.3.4 Reliability**

Reliability concerns the consistency with which something is measured (Robson, 2002), without the achievement of which the measure and any explanations of the measure cannot be valid. The issue of reliability needs to be addressed at several levels. In the first instance it concerns the gathering of the data to be studied. If a different researcher were to enter the field would the data that is gathered be the same? Even if it is the same is it therefore valid? Silverman (2001) identifies three types of reliability: quixotic, diachronic and synchronic. The first refers to a consistent measure, however if the measure is invalid it is of no use. This was addressed through the use of a piloted semi-structured interview schedule, in which any problems with the questions were addressed before being used in the case study schools. When used live, the advantage of the semi-structured interview schedule is that the interviewee and the interviewer can seek clarification as and when considered necessary. Diachronic reliability suggests stability of measurement over a period of time: this may not be achievable or even desirable for what constitutes the constructed reality for the interviewee may change over time as experiences are accrued. Even so, the nature of synthesis means that commonality is established across a number of measures (interviews), which means that the effect of what could be regarded as an outlier is reduced. That said it is important to account for the outlier and not to ignore it. Synchronic reliability suggests similarity of observations within the same time period. The nature of a semi-structured interview is that the respondent is able to correct responses and clarify responses as the interview progresses, just as the interviewer is able to seek clarification as required. In addition, each question is not necessarily independent of every other question and as such there is a degree of cross-referencing possible at both the interview and the analysis stages and also when the transcripts

are checked by the interviewees. While the precise way of achieving this will vary from one research instrument to another, the aim was to record the data in terms that are as concrete as possible (Silverman, 2001), this can include the use of such low-inference descriptors (Seale, 1999) as standardised methods for writing field notes and the preparation of full transcripts, the latter being used in this study, with those transcripts being agreed (after any alterations felt necessary) by the interviewees.

Robson (2002) lists four threats to reliability: participant error, participant bias, observer error and observer bias. These are not unrelated to the three concerns of Silverman (2001). The first pair concern the possibility that what is observed may have been affected by external factors (such as hay fever), or by the desire, for example, to please the observer. Of the 31 interviews undertaken, the researcher was not aware of any illness, but he was aware that the end of an academic year is a very busy time for all teachers and this could have affected the responses of some interviewees. The fact that all of the interviewees were voluntary and that they knew that the interview would take no longer than 45 minutes (the length of the tape) represented an attempt to address the issue of circumstances impacting on the responses. That said the nature of perceptions is that circumstances (such as a recent innovation that has been poorly implemented (as was the case in one school) or an argument between a teacher and a line manager) are likely to impact on an individual and is part of the nature of a socially constructed reality and is accepted as such. The second pair concerns such issues as the incorrect interpretation of what is seen or the use of leading questions in an interview resulting in inbuilt bias. The nature of the interview process, where clarification can be sought and questions may relate to other questions thereby helping to ensure consistency, represents an attempt to ensure that issues such as trying to please the interviewer were

minimised - one cannot be sure, however, that they were not present. The possibilities of observer error and bias are important, the latter highlighting the need for the interviewer to be aware of her/his own constructed reality and represents the issue of the double hermeneutic (Usher, 1996) and the need for reflexivity. The possibility of observer error is reduced by the interactive nature of the interview process, in which clarification can be sought. It is also aided by the questions not being independent of each other, so that later responses may highlight misinterpretations, such that clarifications could be (and were) sought.

#### **3.4.3.5 Validity**

While necessary for validity, reliability by itself does not determine validity, which is “concerned with the extent to which the descriptions of events accurately capture the events” (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995, p105). Many types of validity are recorded (Cohen *et al*, 2000): two in particular are pertinent in this case. The first concerns internal validity, or the degree to which the explanation of a particular event, issue or set of data provided by the research can be sustained by the data (Cohen *et al*, 2000). The threats to internal validity consist of the things that might happen to confuse the issue and result in mistaken conclusions.

One approach to tackle this is triangulation, which has been defined as the “use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour” (Cohen *et al*, 2000, p112). Most applicable for this study is methodological triangulation, of which two variants are identified. The first concerns using the same method on different occasions (within-method triangulation), representing the replication of a study as a check on reliability and theory confirmation. The second concerns different methods used on the same object of

study (between-methods triangulation) in pursuit of a given objective. Within-method triangulation would be consistent with the use of more than one school (as in this case), with the use of sub-groups within each school's sample also representing a form of data-triangulation (Denzin, 1978 – the “person” subtype (p295); Guion, 2002).

Triangulation is not, however, without its critics. Silverman (2001) sees that the use of triangulation as a test of validity “ignores the context-bound and skilful character of social interaction” (p235). He also provides strong criticism against another mechanism used for ensuring validity, namely respondent validation – taking the findings back to the subjects studied. Instead he proposes processes for ensuring validity which include: analytic induction (the process of formulating and then reformulating hypotheses as each case is studied); deviant-case analysis (actively seeking out the case that does not fit and devising a hypothesis that includes the deviant case); and comprehensive data treatment – incorporating all cases of data in the analysis, thereby avoiding the challenge of anecdotalism. These acted as guides on the analysis of the data gathered.

The second form of validity, external validity, refers to the extent to which the results can be applied to a wider set of cases or situations. This might be regarded as being an equivalent to generalisation, although it cannot carry the same significance as might be claimed from a positivist and quantitative perspective. Lincoln & Guba (1985) have identified four threats to external validity: selection effects (where constructs are relevant to only one group), setting effects (where the results are largely a function of their contexts), history effects (where the situations have been arrived at by unique circumstances and so are not transferable), construct effects (where the constructs being used are particular to one group). Schofield (1990)

suggests that a key issue is “the ‘fit’ between the situation as studied and others to which one might be interested in applying the concepts and conclusions of that studied” (p226). While every context is unique, there is likely to be some comparability between many secondary schools and hence a degree of ‘fit’. This suggests that setting effects are probably not going to impact substantially upon external validity and therefore relatability (Bassey, 2001) (this does not assume a ‘fit’ across all schools, rather a ‘fit’ across a broader set of schools than was the focus of the study). The use of a set of four case studies will reduce this threat to validity.

### **3.5 Analysis**

The extensive process of reading and re-reading the 31 transcripts for the correction of errors and resolving issues of clarity was also used for the purpose of immersion into what had been said by the interviewees (Brundrett & Rhodes’ (2014) “Becoming familiar”, p145). Colour was used as a means of coding the transcripts (Miles & Huberman, 1994) and as an initial means of identifying the emerging themes contained therein. This was helped by the structure of the questionnaire, the questions of which were focussed to access specific issues (for example the ‘role’ of the headteacher, ‘consultation’, and individuals’ ‘perceptions’ of their headteachers) and also by the very early inductive development of the schedule to explicitly include the ‘qualities’ deemed important in a headteacher and how one judges the ‘success’ of a headteacher. Using the colour coding as a basis, data reduction (Miles & Huberman, 1994) of the transcripts was aided by ‘cutting and pasting’ them to reflect a finer thematic analysis. This form of the transcripts was the basis for all of the subsequent analysis, although the

original transcripts were referenced many times to ensure quotations were not misused or misrepresented.

For each theme, overview documents were subsequently generated, representing the words of the principle participant groups of the study (headteachers, SLT and non-SLT (broken down further into TLR holders and MS teachers)) within each school. This enabled analysis and synthesis at a school and participant group level. From these, across school documents were generated, which enabled analysis and synthesis across the four case study schools. These highlighted the considerable degree of commonality of the views expressed within each group across the schools.

In acknowledgement of an element of overlap in the 15 themes into which the transcripts had been grouped, a slight re-grouping was undertaken. This did not remove all overlapping, for example 'Style', 'Consultation' and 'Typifies' were kept separate despite reflecting similar things. This was because the interview schedule itself provided more than one avenue for accessing aspects of leadership and its conceptualisation. Table 4.1 lists the final themes.

If one takes 'Trust and Support' to be indicative of 'Individual Concern', then this set of themes encompasses most of the elements of the proto-framework represented by fig. 2.4, with 'Direction' being the possible exception, although this did feature strongly in 'Role'.

	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Main Section(s) in Thesis</b>	<b>RQ</b>
<b>1</b>	Role	4.2/3/4.1	1, 2
<b>2</b>	Qualities	4.2/3/4.2	1, 2
<b>3</b>	Style	5.2	3
<b>4</b>	Consultation/Participation	5.2	3
<b>5</b>	Typifies	5.2	3
<b>6</b>	Broader leadership*	Not treated separately	
<b>7</b>	Trust and Support	5.3	3
<b>8</b>	Success	5.4	3
<b>9</b>	Communication	5.5	3
<b>10</b>	Conflict	5.6	3
<b>11</b>	Influences	Not treated separately	

(\* The term 'Broader Leadership' was used because it was clear that in at least two of the schools, leadership was seen to include the possibilities of both teacher and student leadership and was not restricted to middle leadership alone, although most discussion did relate to middle leaders.)

**Table 4.1: Themes that emerged from the transcripts**

Denscombe (2003) reminds us that:

‘the sense we make of the social world and the meaning we give to events and situations are shaped by our own experiences as social beings and the legacy of the values, norms and concepts we will have assimilated during our lifetime.’  
(p300)

It follows that any analysis and interpretations can never be objective. It also emphasises the need that, despite this, a researcher must attempt to be as objective as possible and therefore put aside personal values and preferences, which would represent bias and potentially invalidate the outcomes of the analysis.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

The aims of the study meant that within Habermas' (1971) 'Three Generic Domains of Human Interest' it fell within 'Practical Interest', thereby indicating a need for an interpretive

approach. Wallace & Poulson's (2003) framework of 'intellectual projects' suggested that within the Practical Interest domain, the study constituted 'knowledge-for-action', although elements also lie within 'knowledge-for-understanding'. Consideration of the research questions against Burrell & Morgan's (1985) four paradigms for analysis of social theory showed that the study lies strongly within the interpretive paradigm and would be qualitative in outlook. The methodology used was a set of four case studies, although not encompassing the richness of a classical single case study, the comparatively limited nature of the study at a school would be offset by the involvement of four schools. By so doing an element of within-method triangulation would be obtained and this would help to improve external validity.

A purposive sample of four schools was identified from the subset of state, boys' selective secondary schools, the subset from which the researcher was more likely to secure access. This was also a group that would appear to have been little researched and about which the literature is almost silent. In narrowing the population in this way, the external validity to the wider population of schools may be reduced. The question of whether there is relatability to the wider population of secondary schools is valid, however a reasonable element of 'fit' between the subset and many other schools that form the population of secondary schools was expected. Guidance was given to the case study schools' headteachers on the selection of a sample of staff from each school, such that eventually 31 interview transcriptions were used in the subsequent analysis, each one having been checked and agreed by the appropriate interviewee.

The research instrument was a semi-structured interview schedule, which gave scope for the possibility of participants providing examples to illustrate their responses. The use of full



transcripts enhanced the reliability of the method employed. A degree of light analysis was undertaken soon after the start of the interviewing process had started, to allow for an inductive approach to the generation of hypotheses through the use of the constant comparative method (Silverman, 2005). Validity was further strengthened through comprehensive data treatment and the inclusion of any deviant cases that emerged, thereby avoiding anecdotalism. Colour coding was used as a first stage in the analysis of the transcripts, to help 'cut' them up. Both 'within school' and 'across school' documents were generated that reflected the responses of the main respondent groups, while maintaining respondent identity. Eleven themes were identified, which contributed to the synthesis of responses to the research questions.

Consideration of the ethical principles demonstrated that care would be needed in how the outcomes of the study were fed back to the participating schools and in writing the thesis and to ensure that no harm befell any participant.

## **CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS 1 - CONCEPTUALISATIONS OF LEADERSHIP (RQ1 and RQ2)**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the conceptualisations of leadership of the headteachers and of their staff. These are presented using the three main groups involved in the study (headteachers, their SLT and non-SLT colleagues) separately. In order to access the individuality of each headteacher and his setting, their comments on 'Role' are presented separately and then brought together. With their comments on 'Qualities' these are then synthesised into a first model of Headteacher leadership. A second model is developed from consideration of the comments from their SLT colleagues. Because of the size of the non-SLT group their comments on 'Role' and 'Qualities' are presented separately and brought together in a third model of headteacher leadership.

### **4.2 Conceptualisations of Leadership: Headteachers (RQ1)**

#### **4.2.1 The 'Role' of a Headteacher**

The four headteachers' responses concerning the role of a headteacher suggested different emphases. A-HT and C-HT started with a crude results orientation, but rapidly moved to broader and perhaps unexpected responses such as 'chief chaplain' and 'father confessor' (A-

HT), and an emphasis on 'happy' (C-HT), suggesting a strong person orientation. B-HT and C-HT had similarities in their early comments with "provide leadership" (B-HT), later described as "the direction the school is travelling in" (B-HT), and "to lead the school forward" (C-HT). Perhaps less expected is the commonality of B-HT with D-HT, both emphasising the 'culture' of the school, with D-HT's final comment being perhaps a little enigmatic: "I see it very much in terms of culture and the head is the person who seeks to shape the culture of the institute."

Four initial ideas may be emerging: leadership (which B-HT suggested is giving 'direction'), standards (possibly in terms of results), 'culture' and, perhaps, 'happiness' (or at least an orientation towards the broader needs of those in the school (A-HT and C-HT)).

Brief consideration is now given to each of the headteachers in turn.

#### **4.2.1.1 School A**

A-HT explained that he had "strong ideas" of "what good education is about", which are put "forward in assemblies, in staff meetings, in parents' evenings, so that everybody understands what we are trying to achieve". Of his philosophy he said:

"the four well stated headteacher aspirations in terms of: pupils being hard working, ambitious and successful; in terms of developing in pupils' intellectual curiosity in their studies that will last a lifetime; that we involve them in a wide array of extra-curricular activity and, in places, ... to go further than they ever dreamed they might go; and that pupils will also have high moral values and good standards of behaviour."

What is clear is that at the heart of A-HT's actions is an educational philosophy, that is shared frequently at his school. When asked how he would know if he had been successful in his intentions, he explained: "there's a feeling to the school. ... you see it simply in terms of the involvement of everybody and their excitement of being involved." Implicit here is the expectation that all teachers will share an extended professionalism orientation (Evans, 1998).

Notable is the strong focus on what others (in particular B-HT and D-HT) might call the "culture" of the school, and that the results of the students in external exams did not feature in A-HT's response to the issue of success. When probed on this he responded by quoting what he tells the newspapers: "The icing on the top of a rich and wholesome cake", "if the rest is going well then your results will go that way." He stated this with confidence, for elsewhere he pointed out that the results had increased in each of his years as a headteacher. The "wholesome cake" is clarified by his comment that "you must have a width of activities to involve everyone" and that "very much celebration is a key aspect of the whole school". He continued: "I think very strongly this idea of getting people to go further and raise the level of aspirations is very important". He expanded on this: "you've got pupils in your school that err have exceptional talents and you must stretch those as far as you possibly can, but you also have pupils in your school that might not be exceptionally talented, ... you must have the width of activities to involve everybody in that."

#### **4.2.1.2 School B**

B-HT, when asked about how one measures success commented that "I think judging education is difficult." He suggested that results is the "crudest way", but that there "are other

factors”, which influence how a student performs. He continued “It’s something you can’t measure, ... its something this school has always done, ... they have got the ability to have a genuine work-life balance. We’re not just preparing them for work, we’re actually trying to prepare these boys to use their spare time constructively. ... It will give them fulfilment and a richness to their lives.” The message given to the students is: “if you come to this school ... I want you to participate. If you are coming here and doing nine to five lessons and going home, a) you’re missing out on a lot of enjoyment, but b) you’re actually missing out on half your education, you’re truanting.” He explained that this is not simply a message without substance, rather that “we give an extremely high profile to extra-curricular” and that this is accompanied by individual recognition “in whatever extra-curricular the boys do”. He summed up: “it’s about how happy students are, irrespective of grades they get, how happy they are and how confident they are about facing the challenges of the outside world”.

This importance of the whole life of the students at the school echoes the philosophy expounded by A-HT, although B-HT is perhaps more acutely aware of the presence of judgement by exam results: “unfortunately we are, whether we like it or not, measured by examination results and if you don’t keep an eye on that I think it will come back to bite you. ... when you look at Ofsted, what’s the thing that really matters? It’s CVA Key Stages 2 to 4. ... Now, we’re fighting to keep the other things on board.” He went on to link this broader approach to success to his staff: “there’s a belief that the role of a teacher in this school is more than just delivering your subject in the classroom and the vast majority of staff get involved in extra-curricular”. He explained that this was the “culture within this school”, adding that: “What I mean by culture is ‘the things that we do round here’”, “there is an expectation that what makes this place a successful and happy school is that the vast majority

of staff get involved in extra-curricular provision.” Once again an extended professionalism orientation is expected, as was the case in all four schools.

#### **4.2.1.3 School C**

The interview with C-HT followed a different line, although not at variance with what has been seen elsewhere. It reflected a sub-cultural issue with which he had needed to deal: “One of the things I didn’t like when I arrived at the school ... staff were not short in either being sarcastic to or about boys and shouting at them, particularly in public ... and I didn’t think boys should be berated for things like that”. He added later “I’d like to think I’ve had some success in this area, but it has been difficult ...”. As in schools A and B, C-HT’s actions reflected an attempt to place the student at the centre of the school’s work in the minds of all staff not just some staff. This reflects C-HT’s values and illustrates how hard it is if the values of the headteacher are not shared by some colleagues. C-HT put the problems down to “the longevity of the staff” such that “there were some aspects of the school that reminded me very much of the grammar school that a) I went to and b) I first joined in the 1970s.” In addition he felt that one of the “weaknesses of leadership when I arrived was the fact that ‘we’re judged by our results’ sort of attitude, ‘therefore there isn’t anything we can improve’” and this, he suggested “is the greatest danger, an arrogance and a matching complacency”. In considering his attempt to bring about attitudinal change, C-HT commented that: “I often feel that with some colleagues I do struggle ... to change their behaviour, colleagues who have served the school for many, many years ... so it’s incredibly difficult to change patterns of behaviour, let alone their style of teaching.”

C-HT reflected ruefully that: “One of the great issues of today is that unless something is measurable it is not deemed to be of any use”, adding “I think it is more sophisticated than that, you’re dealing with an organisation that is serving humans, young people.” In regard to success, he stated that: “the sort of lads who go out from here are, by any measure, well educated, but seem to be pretty decent young people and as prepared as any young person can be for the challenges and opportunities of the next stage”. Once again the focus is on the whole student, not results alone.

#### **4.2.1.4 School D**

In D-HT’s interview, what became clear was that his ability to communicate with his staff was seen as vital. “I think it is just your presence around the place that has the impact ... I think it is being around the place and ... communicating ... a vision for it.” He went on to say that “it is manifested just by ... all those hundreds of interactions during the day. They are probably far more important than a school development plan or something like that. I think it is how you are coming over, the messages you’re communicating ... and the set of values they bring with them as well.” In this he was acknowledging that it does not matter what one says one values and wants to see, it must be reflected in one’s actions. He encapsulated this in “this old fashioned idea of the head walking the walk and talking the talk.”

Even though by most measures his work at the school had been successful (at least as far as Ofsted and external exam results would suggest), rather than attributing the success to himself he is clear that “often successful leadership ... is because that person’s style happens to fit in to the cultural parameters that were probably within the school anyway.” He went on to say

that in his own case “the fact that I’m not particularly inclined to go around banging the table or throwing tantrums or yelling at people ... that fitted in to the existing style, existing sense of the way we do things around here.” He was clear that he is “very focussed on the team, the leadership team is I think the key rather than the head as an individual. I think the focus on the team fits in quite well with the ... collegiate ... atmosphere, ... within the school.” Despite this he added that “having said that, my personal view is that you need to be very clear in terms of communication” and that “I’m quite confident in standing up in front of large groups of people” so “I will stand up ... and say ‘... this is where we are going’ and try and establish the leadership style that way.” The two together, the “hundreds of interactions” and “large groups”, suggest a very person oriented approach to leadership, with an allusion elsewhere to an underpinning of strong values.

#### **4.2.1.5 Across the Schools**

Amongst the differences there are significant commonalities suggesting a strong focus on the overall experience of each student and that this forms part of an educational philosophy, which was explicitly espoused to the students by A-HT and strongly implied by B-HT, C-HT and D-HT. In the case of A-HT, he explicitly said, with respect to the broad student centred view of education, that “I’m sure the grammar schools have a very strong understanding of, err that idea, but I don’t think the comprehensives do. ... there’s not sufficient thought within that of actually developing children as a whole person.” As a comment on comprehensive schools, this would be challenged by many, but it does emphasise the importance that is placed on the educational philosophy and the headteacher’s values.



The references to ‘happy’ and ‘happiness’ may be significant. For B-HT “how happy the students are” was seen as an important measure of success, but he then went on to broaden it: “what makes this a successful and happy school is that the vast majority of staff get involved in extra-curricular participation”: for him ‘happiness’ matters. C-HT also felt that happiness was an ingredient of any measure of success and the headteacher “needs to ensure he creates a busy, happy and successful place.” D-HT commented that for his previous headteacher “a happy school was a successful school” and, when reflecting at the end of his interview, he said: “it’s a good place to be ... we’re doing good things as well, ’cause that happiness is at the centre of it.” That ‘happiness’ is seen as important is clear – it will be considered further in chapter 5.

D-HT has said that often a person is a successful leader because “that person’s style of leadership happens to fit in to the cultural parameters that were probably therefore within the school anyway”, but elsewhere he suggested that “the head is the person who seeks to shape the culture of the organisation”. For him this concept of ‘culture’ is very important, a feeling that is also reflected in what was said by B-HT. Perhaps in the comments by A-HT, one saw that this ‘shaping’ was done in the past and therefore the school works within a culture he has shaped. While B-HT reflected on how he had moved the school forward in terms of a consultative approach, in many of his comments, particularly in terms of the broader view of education, he is predominantly working within a pre-existing culture.

It could be argued that since these schools were successful schools when the headteachers arrived and that they served very able students, supported by articulate parents, the success they sought was inevitable. There could be some truth in such a claim, but it may not be so

simple. One of the schools, using an indicative measure of multiple deprivation based on local authority post-code analysis, had thirty percent of its students from backgrounds of the highest level of multiple deprivation (twenty percent would be the England expectation). Two of the schools, those served by the longest serving headteachers, had steadily increased their academic performance over their period in office (fifteen years for A-HT and eight for D-HT), this being done while seeking to enact their educational philosophies and with a broadly unchanged intake. All four headteachers had helped to move their school's Ofsted judgement from 'very good' to 'outstanding', this apparently being done while concentrating on what they all perceive as their broader measures of success.

From what the headteachers say one might begin to postulate a layered model that reflects their headships. At the bedrock are headteachers' values, which lead to a philosophy of education and conceptualisation of leadership (possibly declared), which in turn lead to the development (or maintenance) of the school's culture and the expression of the leadership in practice.

#### **4.2.2 The 'Qualities' Required of a Headteacher**

Very early in the interviewing process it became clear that the respondents wanted to mention (explicitly or by strong inference) the qualities that they thought were required of a headteacher and that this yielded information that would be of potential interest. It was therefore decided that this should become an explicit line of questioning, inference being used with any earlier interviews as necessary. Their responses lay in both the cognitive (Bloom *et al*, 1956) and affective (Bloom *et al*, 1965) domains. While one might argue about which if

any domain a quality (if that is what it is) belongs, the strong emphasis on the affective domain was recognised by each headteacher. This does not, however, deny the importance of the cognitive skills, without which, one might suggest, the potential power of the people skills to help lead is significantly weakened, but it does reflect the observation of Fullan (2003b, p454) that “emotional intelligence is equal to or more important than having the best ideas” (even so, although necessary, emotional intelligence is not a sufficient condition for good leadership (Grunes *et al*, 2014)).

What is clear is that whether one uses the construct of the affective domain (Bloom, 1965; Anderson *et al*, 2001), emotional intelligence (Salovey & Mayer, 1990) or the personal intelligences (Gardner, 1983 & 1999), C-HT’s observation that “unless someone is good with people, leadership is, by and large, beyond them”, would seem to be accurate

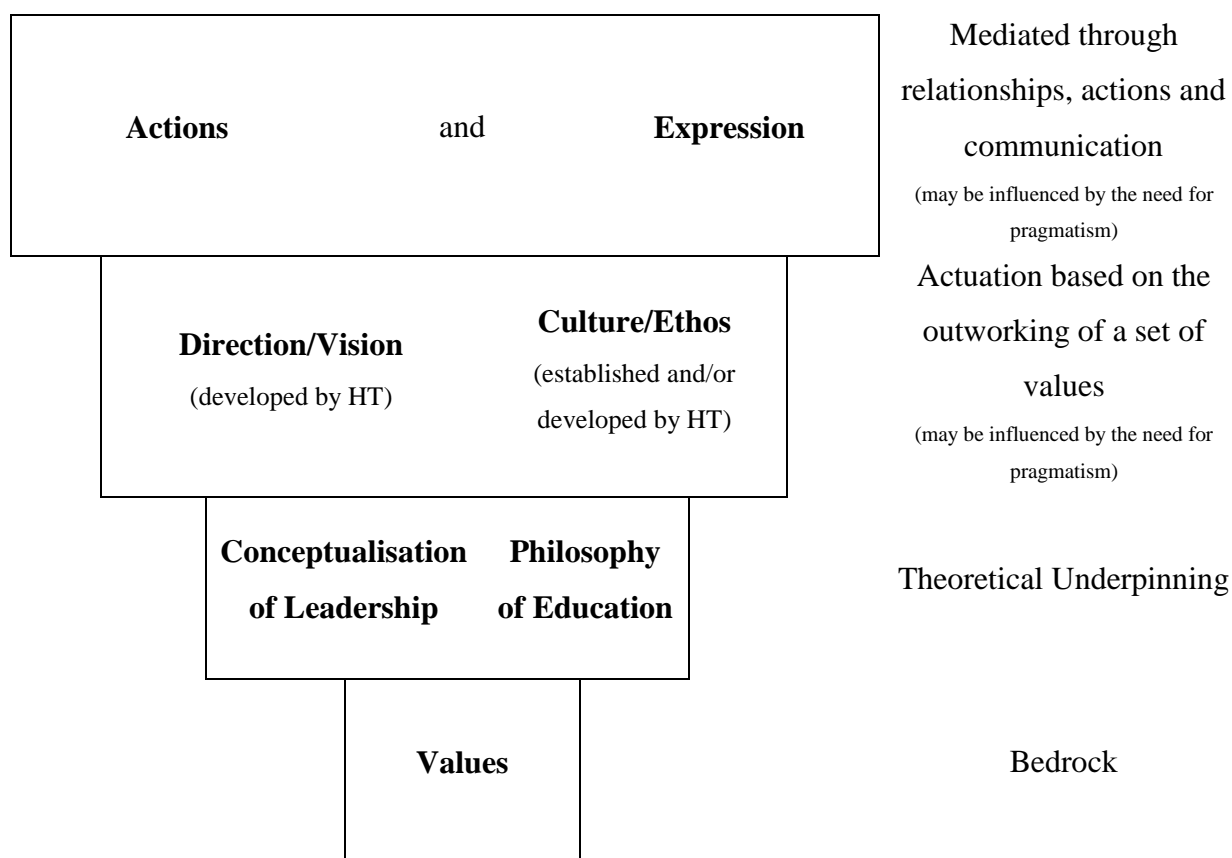
#### **4.2.3 Discussion**

The headteacher interviews indicated that at the base of the headteacher’s action is a set of values from which come her/his philosophy of education and conceptualisation of leadership. In turn these manifest themselves in the culture the headteacher seeks to shape at the school and also the vision or direction s/he wishes the school to take. In theory this latter is developed with the various stakeholders, but the more typical situation was described by D-HT: “I think in many people’s experience in reality the head is saying to the governors, just as he is saying to the staff, ‘look this is where I think we gotta go folks’ ... ‘are you coming with me?’” These are then brought about through the headteacher’s actions. Taken as a whole this can be encapsulated in the fig. 4.2.3.

The theoretical underpinning, perhaps partly tacit but made explicit through actions, does not assume that the ‘Conceptualisation’ and the ‘Philosophy’ do not influence each other. Indeed with all four headteachers the philosophy had primacy over the conceptualisation. The headteachers in this study tended to use the terms ‘direction’ and ‘vision’ interchangeably, for example B-HT said of ‘vision’ “it’s about the direction you’re taking it” and D-HT referred to “you set the strategic direction”. The emphasis on ‘direction’ reflects the proto-framework of fig. 2.4.

This model does not deny the idea that “values are the bedrock of any corporate culture” (Deal & Kennedy, 1988, p21), those values being corporate in nature. However, this model highlights the headteacher’s values and when they are at variance with existing corporate values, the headteacher seeks to bring about a change – “reculturalisation” (Glover & Coleman, 2005, p263), for as Schein (2011) and Lumby (2012) remind us, while climate cannot be directly changed, it can be influenced.

The importance of values to this model (fig. 4.2.3) is clear. The ‘bedrock’ of values is the headteacher’s fundamental or ‘transrational’ (Hodgkinson, 1991) values (although some type 2 values may also be present). If a headteacher does not possess such fundamental values, then the model is not applicable, but one might question how the staff would react if fundamental values were not perceived. In such a situation there is likely to be a negative impact on trust (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000), with subsequent negative impacts on relationships and teacher job satisfaction (Maele & Houtte, 2012), and, indirectly (via collective and teacher self-efficacy), on student outcomes (Canrinus *et al*, 2012; Kurt *et al*, 2012).



**Fig. 4.2.3: ‘Values to Action’: a model for headteacher leadership**

Based on this framework, the value placed on a form of participatory decision making (also seen in the proto-framework) that is evident in at least three of the headteachers could be seen as a value based in ‘consequences’ (one of the type 2 values), namely of a better outcome. However the conflict experienced by C-HT in seeking to change how certain teachers dealt with the students may reflect a transrational value – a fundamental belief about which there can be no compromise. Busher & Barker (2003) remind us that such conflict or resistance “is a normal part of organisational life as people try to sustain or assert their own values and beliefs against the ... senior leaders” (p52) and ought to be expected. Haydon (2007) points out that moral or ethical matters concern “how people are treated – how people behave towards each other” (p38) and that such values are beyond the desirable, they are obligatory.

This was seen in C-HT's actions, which could be perceived as an aspect of moral purpose (Fullan, 2003c). Perhaps it is this idea to which B-HT referred, when he spoke of his "moral authority".

Where, however, do these values come from? Ribbins (2003) suggests that "headteachers of the future are socialised into deep rooted norms and values by the action and interaction of such key agencies as the family, school, peer groups, the local community and other reference groups" (p63) and that in particular the early years is responsible for "shaping the personality – by generating a concept of self, along with the rudiments of a work style, attitude and outlook" (p63). Gronn (1999) agrees with this, perhaps placing an even greater emphasis on "her or his own primary carers" (p34). The headteacher interviews make clear the impact of the examples set earlier in their careers by headteachers under whom they had served, thereby agreeing with Ribbins (1997), in effect reflecting a form of professional socialisation brought about by these experiences, with exemplified outcomes that were both custodial and innovative (Schein, 1971). A-HT referred to two headteachers with whom he had worked. About one he said "he had a very strong vision in terms of his school, he had a very strong understanding in terms of individual members of staff and what made them tick", while of the other, when A-HT was a deputy, he said "staff said they worked in spite of him. He thought he was very hard, he was very tough, but he closed people down, put them in straitjackets." The two headteachers had a strong influence on him. A similar although less extreme contrast was mentioned by B-HT and also C-HT, who commented that he "tried to be like the people I've admired and to adopt an approach which got the best from youngsters and colleagues", this being both in teaching and leading. D-HT spoke positively of two headteachers, the first from when he was a deputy and the second from when he was a head of department. Of the

second he commented “my then head ... [said] ‘You’re not quite ready to be a head yet because you’re not quite ready to do the nasty ... parts of the job’. ... he did offer to teach me some of those, which he proceeded to do by threatening to sack some of my department – that was a good experience”.

While fig. 4.2.3 presupposes a conceptualisation of leadership and a philosophy of education which are grounded on values, it does not necessarily make any claims as to what those values may be or how they are outworked. It is, in a sense, empty and capable of containing the model provided by fig. 2.4. Indeed the comments provided by the headteachers suggested that the issues of direction, individual concern and participation from the proto-framework, can be and, in the case of the four headteachers in this study, are important to the outworking of the model – the fourth element of ‘communication’ is explored in chapter 5.

There are potential implications here for the identification of headteachers, or at least headteachers in similar contexts to the schools in the study, for it could be suggested that their ‘success’ (explored in chapter 5) is based on values leading to a philosophy of education and a conceptualisation of leadership. It is suggestive of a need for academic rigour linked to a strong sense of instinct guided by strong people skills (perhaps most evident in A-HT and D-HT). How can this be identified in the appointment process? How can potential headteachers be prepared for such a scenario? To what extent is it realistic for headteachers in other contexts to be semi-dismissive (but not unaware) of the strong accountability framework that prevails (at least in England) or is it a luxury of context? Is the idea of ‘happiness’ that has emerged naivety (another luxury of context) or is it an indicator of a deeper concern, perhaps more all embracing than the ‘individual concern’ of the proto-framework (fig. 2.4)?

While it was right to construct a model based on the headteachers' comments, it would be wrong to infer that it represents reality, other than a reality they wish to present (explicitly or otherwise), without considering the views of their colleagues. To do so would be to make the error identified by Gronn (2005) of the sole use of leader autobiography in the development of theory.



### **4.3 Conceptualisations of Leadership: SLT (RQ2)**

#### **4.3.1 The ‘Role’ and Qualities’ of a Headteacher**

A-DH was clear that in his view the role of the headteacher was to “set the vision” and to “encourage the vision”, by which he meant “to enable the people to buy into it, fuel it and expand it, to run with it”. Right from the start, therefore, he is emphasising the need for strong people skills. Of the vision, he went on to say that it is “what the school should be in terms of its culture, its ethos, its policies, its practices, the experience of the stakeholders”. In this he was echoing some of the ideas expressed by the headteachers. He spoke a little about other aspects of the role such as “working into the system ... opportunities for staff to do other things” and “looking to have a system that is emotionally intelligent”, this latter comment highlighting an approach that was subsequently emphasised. This can be seen in his comment that: “the headteacher needs to have the wear-with-all in terms not just of educational philosophy, but in terms of emotional intelligence and the people skills so as to be able to reflect their vision in the way different staff will be able to understand ... be able to weld together the whole”. In this one statement he is linking together both cognitive and affective skills, again reflecting the views of the four headteachers. For clarity he explained what he meant by emotional intelligence: “one is able to communicate in such a way that makes people comfortable, enables them to have options ... encourages them in the direction in which the school is going”. While this is not the definition of either Mayer & Salovey (1993) or Goleman (1996), it is consistent with the outworking of emotional intelligence as they would define it. It is also consistent with the use of the personal intelligences defined by Gardner (1983, 2006), particularly inter-personal intelligence.

This emphasis on the affective domain was consistent throughout the comments by the members of the SLT, irrespective of whether the question intended to focus on the role of the headteacher or the qualities required of the headteacher. A-SNT referred to “exciting people” and also the occasional use of “coercion”, something echoed by A-DH: “There’s a degree of coercion at times, ... for a minority of staff ... there is something a little stronger than coercion, which calls on their professional duty”, thereby reflecting what might be considered as the softer people skills needing to be tempered with an element of steel. Both C-HT and D-HT, who encountered opposition at times, would agree that this was necessary.

In his responses, A-SNT mentioned a number of practical duties and requirements (such as “a thorough understanding of teaching” (something with which D-SNT might disagree, given her feeling that the shortage of people from a teaching background wanting to be headteachers will lead to non-teachers becoming headteachers), “responsible for overseeing the various committees”, “chief executive officer of the school”), but he mentioned more than once the need for him to be “somebody you look up to, respect I think is crucial”. This reflected his considerable admiration for his headteacher, seeing him as a strong and very good leader. ‘Respect’ was also mentioned by other interviewees.

Some of the responses from all of the non-headteacher SLT contributors are summarised and categorised in the table 4.3.1. It is accepted that some comments in the table span more than one category, the point of the table is to illustrate that the demands placed on the abilities of the headteacher are diverse and considerable, placing an emphasis on both the inter- and intra-personal skills of the headteacher, without which the ‘Figurehead’ aspect may be impossible

and the effectiveness of the ‘Action’ may be somewhat reduced. It is of interest that headteachers are to be an innovators – for the SLT, more of the same is not an option.

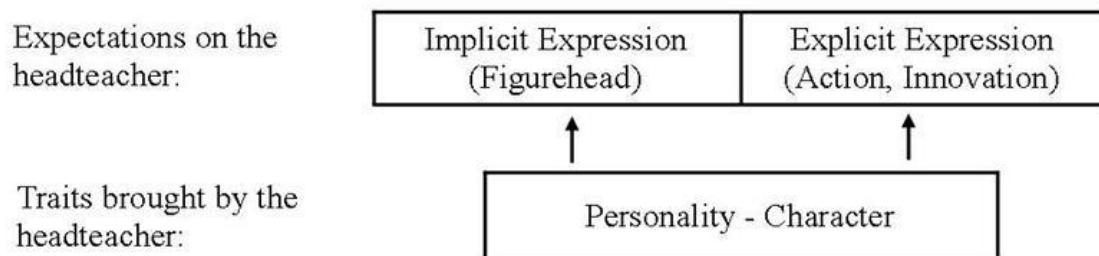
<p><b>Figurehead</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“a visionary”</li> <li>“a role model for members of staff”</li> <li>“Take the values of a school” and the vision and lead it forward</li> <li>“aura and charisma to charm people”</li> <li>“sets a tone”</li> <li>“The head is the school”</li> <li>“you’ve got to think that person is worthy of you following”</li> <li>“respect”</li> </ul>	<p><b>Innovator</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“a visionary”</li> <li>“the ideas flow from him, he’s got to delegate it and share it and take everybody with him”</li> <li>“willing to step outside the box, ...keep pushing and not rest on laurels”</li> <li>“have the wisdom of Solomon”</li> </ul>
<p><b>Inter-personal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“someone who listens to you, someone who guides”</li> <li>“he’s got to delegate it and share it and take everybody with him”</li> <li>Accessible “on a professional level” and “sometimes on a personal level”</li> <li>“it’s about relating to people”</li> <li>“aura and charisma to charm people”</li> <li>Cope with the “person who’s moody” or the “person who’s upset”</li> <li>“encourage”</li> <li>“it’s the way you communicate to the them, the way you share the vision and the way you talk to them, ... bring them into conversations and make them feel part of the process”</li> <li>“Consulting all the staff and empowering and making them feel part of the process”</li> <li>“a diplomat, a politician and finance manager, a personnel manager”</li> <li>“it’s a personality thing, it’s a way of talking to people, it’s a way of showing that you’re interested, it’s a way of making them feel valued and being decent with them and fair with them even when you’re disagreeing with them”</li> </ul>	<p><b>Intra-personal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cope with the “person who’s are moody” or the “person who’s upset”</li> <li>“you should ... share the load, but ... need ... one person to make the decisions”</li> <li>“you’ve got to think that person is worthy of you following”</li> <li>“the job’s going to take over your life”</li> <li>“someone who could cope with that, not be submerged by it and have the energy still then to move things forward, according to a set of values which they deem important.”</li> <li>“They dig into their own personalities and find the qualities that enable them to do that, ... at the end of the day there’s so much personality involved.”</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“someone who comes with ideas ... put them to the rest of the staff and lead them forward”</li> <li>“has a vision of where he wants the school to be and ... some idea of how he wants to go”</li> <li>“the ideas flow from him, he’s got to delegate it and share it and take everybody with him”</li> <li>“the skill of being dynamic”</li> <li>“sets a tone”</li> <li>“creative tension between ... [the school’s] values and ... wanting the head to keep [it] moving forward”</li> <li>“you should ... share the load, but ... need ... one person to make the decisions”</li> <li>“Management ability, ability to delegate”</li> <li>“a diplomat, a politician and finance manager, a personnel manager”</li> <li>“able to multi-task”</li> </ul>	

**Table 4.3.1: Headteacher Skills identified by the SLT**

Notable are comments that echo Crawford (2007a, 2007b) and Rhodes & Greenway (2010) in pointing out the personal costs of being a headteacher, offering the need to “share the load” as a means of managing that cost. In their responses the headteachers conveyed a strongly whole-student centred view of the purpose of education, which at this point was not echoed by the rest of their SLT members. One possibility here is that they had not developed their educational philosophy to the same extent as seen in the headteachers – perhaps this is why they were not at that point headteachers themselves. Even so, there is a developed conceptualisation of leadership within their comments, but as with the headteachers this was subjugated to the philosophy of education where deemed necessary.

The SLT responses may hint at a two layered picture of headteacher leadership (fig. 4.3.1), at the base of which are aspects of personality and character, from which emerge two forms of expression – the implicit and the explicit. In the explicit expression the emphasis is on action and innovation by the headteacher (“dynamic”, “diplomat”, “multi-task”, “lead”, “pushing”, “visionary”, “ideas”, “wisdom”). In the implicit expression the emphasis is on the expectations of staff based on the figurehead nature of the role (“the head is the school”, D-DH). There is a sense in which this is not active, but is bestowed on the headteacher and therefore it is passive, in that it is assumed rather like a mantle that comes with the position, although the mantle itself would require headteacher enactment. The failure of the headteacher to live up to the expectations of this mantle (“respect”, “role model”, “awe”) is likely to impact on trust (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999). While such expectations would be school specific, being linked to the context in which it operates, it may also be that they are, to some degree, sector specific (in the sense of selective schools, comprehensive schools, independent schools) or even phase specific (primary schools, secondary schools), with

different sectors and different phases expecting more (or *different* things) from the implicit expression.



**Fig. 4.3.1a: Two-layered picture of headteacher leadership**

From the headteacher’s personality and character come the headteacher’s inter-personal and intra-personal skills (honed or otherwise) and it is from these skills that the implicit and explicit expressions are enacted and from the degree to which expectations are met judgments are made. This picture is not at variance with the “Values to Action” model (fig. 4.2.3), rather it is complementary to it, being viewed from a different perspective.

The base layer of fig. 4.3.1a represents all that the headteacher brings to the post from *within*. On this base the ‘expression’ layer is enacted by the headteacher, with such concepts as ‘figurehead’ and ‘mantle’ being suggestive of performance. There is a sense that the expectations layer demonstrates the ideas of leadership ‘as’ performance and leadership ‘is’ performance (Peck *et al*, 2009; Rhodes & Greenway, 2010; Peck & Dickinson, 2010):

Leadership ‘*is*’ performance: actions that can be associated with organisational rituals,  
 prepared in some manner, even rehearsed; literal performance

Leadership ‘*as*’ performance: broad range of everyday interactions, spontaneous;  
 metaphorical performance

Using this performance framework, the implicit expression would cover any events for which there may be mastered behaviour (“prepared and rehearsed” (Peck *et al*, 2009, p26)), therefore covering such events as school assemblies, Speech Night, Open Evening, Governors’ Meetings, middle leadership meetings – these latter because in addition to the spontaneous elements, there will be prepared presentations and prepared positions. Indeed any meeting for which there is an element of ‘ritual’ or for which an element of preparation is required can be associated with performance ‘is’, this may be especially so with those schools which are long established, particularly therefore (but not exclusively) some selective and independent schools. The concept of ‘ritual’ may be divided into *explicit* ritual and *implicit* ritual. *Explicit* ritual would include all that is overtly theatrical in nature – Open Evenings, Prize-Giving, in fact any special ceremony (even if it is part of the standard life of the school). *Implicit* ritual would include what might be considered to be covertly theatrical – the presentation of a paper at a meeting would be an example. Both forms would reflect aspects of the culture of the school.

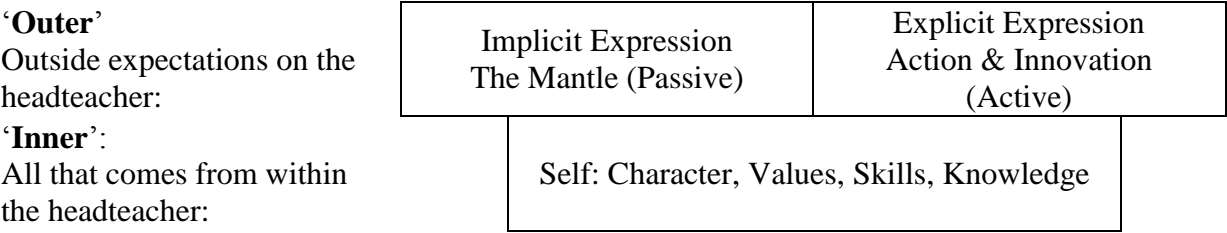
To link the explicit expression to performance ‘as’ is to broaden it to all that which is spontaneous, of the moment and unrehearsed within headship, as well as the sense of action and innovation brought about by the headteacher. It cannot, however, be *equated* with ‘innovation’ for the bringing about of innovation will often entail elements of ritual, yet its success will require the spontaneity found within relationships and social interactions.

The base layer of fig. 4.3.1a refers to ‘personality and character’, but as suggested earlier, this could be broader, reflecting all that the headteacher brings to the post, including the skills that have been developed over the headteacher’s upbringing and career. It is the dynamic

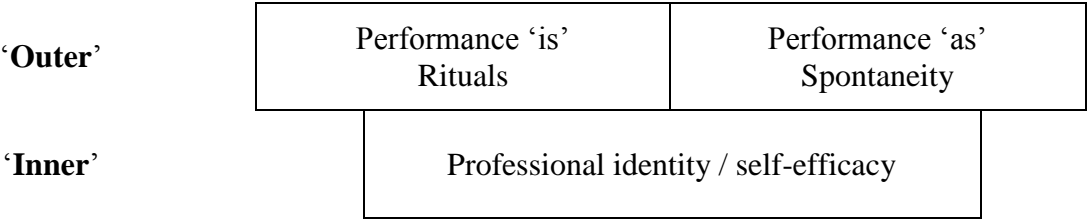
integration of all of these experiences garnered over a lifetime that help with the development of a headteacher’s professional identity (Beijaard *et al*, 2004), including answering the question “What does it mean for me to be headteacher at this school right now?”, thereby emphasising the contextual nature of professional identity. As such it includes the headteacher’s beliefs and values as well as her/his skills and personality traits.

The base layer will also incorporate the headteacher’s sense of self-efficacy – one’s judgment of one’s ability to “structure a particular course of action in order to produce desired outcomes for the school” (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004, p573) that one leads. There is a sense in which self-efficacy and professional identity represent all that the headteacher brings to the post, since they are expressions of the headteacher’s values, skills, knowledge and character. When added to a performance framework, fig. 4.3.1a takes on two forms, A and B: they are not the same, but they possess a degree of equivalence:

**Fig. 4.3.1b: Model A**



**Fig. 4.3.1c: Model B**



The ‘*inner*’ layer of both Models A and B could be regarded as the same, in the sense that they both represent all that the headteacher brings to the role, but express this in different ways. What is emphasised is that there is a personal cost to headship, to a degree this was seen in C-HT, for it is very much a giving of oneself within a complex and dynamic social and political context (Rhodes & Greenway, 2010; Crawford, 2007a). By the division of expectations in Model A into ‘passive’ and ‘active’, it seeks to show that some of those (passive) expectations are endowed by the culture of the school itself, in part it relates to ‘the way we do things here’ (Bower, 1966), some of which are likely to be historical in nature and thereby help to define the institution itself; these may often be ritualistic in their format. The headteacher who wishes to reshape such aspects may do so at their own risk and would be advised to do so only after establishing a positive track-record and establishing very positive relationships. Equally the headteacher is expected to be active in moving the school forward, with failure to do so impacting on trust and also job satisfaction (Evans, 1998), although, as the headteachers found out, not all are happy with change.

The ‘*outer*’ layer is where the headteacher is on show and from where inferences about the ‘*inner*’ layer and judgments may be made. The adoption of a performance perspective, as in Model B, provides a different perspective for analysing leadership in schools and elsewhere. Lumby & English (2009) argue for a three step analysis: engaging, scripting and enacting.

**Engaging** – how do potential headteachers become headteachers; how do they learn what it means for ‘me’ to be a headteacher? As such it is about identity formation, but it cannot be a fully developed professional identity without a specific school context (Beijaard *et al*, 2004) – fully developed does not mean ‘static’.



**Scripting** – from model A, aspects of the script may be pre-prepared (sometimes by those outside of the school) and immutable (model B’s ‘rituals’), while others may be malleable or even the expectation is of new scripts (the active generation of change).

**Enacting** – forging an understanding of the rituals and their place within the institution and the dynamic development of professional identity in the context of the school and beyond, as one enters groups into which the headteacher status provides access.

Such a perspective begs questions of how potential headteachers are identified (Rhodes, 2012), how they are prepared for the role and how they are supported in the role (Rhodes & Greenway, 2010). Other questions and implications would include:

- How are headteachers helped to:
  - understand the rituals (and myths) of the school and to enter into them?
  - understand how those rituals (and myths) contribute to institutional identity and from there to the culture of the school?
  - understand the extent to which such rituals (and myths) contribute to the outcomes of the school – perhaps in terms of results, perhaps more broadly?
  - bring about change to rituals (and myths) that help to augment those outcomes?
- How can those from outside who judge a school be helped to understand the significance of such rituals (and myths) and how they contribute to institutional outcomes?
- What is the impact of ritual, especially in contexts with heavily formalised ritual (as may be seen in schools with an extended historical setting), on the headteacher’s professional identity and self-efficacy?

- How does the mantle or the ritual impact on a headteacher in terms of the expense of their inner resources (especially emotional costs) and how can headteachers be prepared for this and supported in doing so? (Perhaps through a ‘professional significant other’ (PSO), although Crow (2007) draws attention to some of the disadvantages when this PSO could be regarded as a ‘veteran’.)

The framework for analysis seen in Lumby & English (2009) is not the only possibility. For example, Peck & Dickinson (2010) argue for a different analysis centred upon enactment (what leaders actually do), narrative (the stories leaders use, including organisational sensemaking to bring about certain actions from followers) and audience (which may be the followers who legitimate the leader’s leadership (or not) and others who may judge the actions of the leader). The questions that arise from this form of analysis do not explicitly deal with rituals and myths, but the context is the organisation, and sensemaking demands, at least in part, an understanding of such rituals and myths, although not enslavement to them.

#### **4.4. Conceptualisations of Leadership: non-SLT (RQ2)**

The non-SLT group, being divided between those teachers with Teaching and Learning Responsibilities (TLR) (middle leaders) and mainscale (MS) teachers, was the largest group involved in this study. Even so, looking for differences between the two sub-groups was difficult, sometimes because of the small number of responses of any particular type generated. Despite this, where *possible* differences are found, they were noted.

##### **4.4.1 The ‘Role’ of a Headteacher**

Examination of the interview extracts on the theme ‘Role’ resulted in the identification of many aspects, some of which were combined because they appeared to be similar, or the interviewer’s comments suggested an equivalence (reflecting the problem of the ‘double’ hermeneutic’ (Usher, 1996)). It is also accepted that some of the aspects may overlap and are not necessarily disjoint, which their treatment might indicate. The inability to seek clarification from the interviewees means that this could weaken the validity of the outcomes. The result of the process of tabulation for ‘Role’ is recorded in table 4.4.1. A minimum frequency of 5 (representing approximately 25% of the respondents) was set on the basis that it was not so small as to have a significant likelihood of representing outlier results or random events.

From table 4.4.1 a picture of the desired headteacher for the non-SLT teaching staff of a school begins to emerge. That person should be a good leader, in particular providing a sense of direction for the work of the school, but they should also represent the school and be a

person to whom a teacher could aspire. In this position the person would be expected to shape the culture of the school and also demonstrate that they can manage well. This is complemented by the ability to manage people well and to communicate effectively.

No. responses	Aspect
16	Lead (includes forward looking/sense of direction/vision)
9	Strong people skills (as listed above)
8	Figurehead (includes role model/set the example)
7	Manage well
6	Shape the culture
6	Accessible and approachable
5	Awareness of school and beyond
5	Communicate at all levels

**Table 4.4.1: Results from the non-SLT group (responses of at least 25% (5 or more)) for the theme ‘Role’**

Slight differences were found between the TLR and MS respondents (only differences of at least 20% in the frequencies were used in order to minimise random effects). While the differences were marginal, they are worthy of note for they indicate slight differences in expectation:

- **MS teachers:** these teachers are more likely to look for a headteacher with a strong character that is a role model to whom they can aspire (perhaps reflecting aspects of the ‘Figurehead’ role of a headteacher), they also expect the headteacher to have procedures to monitor the school
- **TLR holders:** these teachers are more likely to look for a person who will support them in their work (one might speculate that this is with regard to their middle leadership role) and who has a finger on the pulse of the school. In particular they seek to know that the person can manage the finances well. (This may appear to stress good management skills on the part of the headteacher.)

It is not surprising that TLR holders would be more concerned with support, given that they have additional responsibilities for which they are accountable. With regard to MS teachers, the desire to have a headteacher to whom they can aspire was not dependent on whether the teacher is newly qualified or not, however since most of the teachers in this group are more likely to be in the early stages of their career, this particular interpretation would seem reasonable. The fact that the MS teachers expected monitoring much more than the TLR holders may indicate an on-going reluctance on the part of the TLR holders (middle leaders) to monitor. This may be due to the possible “inter-personal role conflict” (Turner, 2003, p218) middle leaders feel or perceive as possible from an activity that may damage “their good relationships with their team members” (Wise, 2001, p339). It need not be a failure to perceive monitoring as legitimate (Wise, 2001), rather it could be a concern about possible consequences and how they can be managed - as D-HT put it, perhaps a little unfairly, “they want ... the leadership team to do the nasty bits of the job.”

#### **4.4.2 The ‘Qualities’ of a Headteacher**

A similar process was undertaken for ‘Qualities’ as for ‘Role’, entailing the same caveats and concerns, table 4.4.2 being the outcome.

The table suggests high level inter- and intra-personal skills, but intellectual ability did not feature strongly in the responses, perhaps because it was taken for granted or thought to be implied by the high level affective skills (Anderson *et al*, 2001), for when the qualities are added to aspects of the ‘Role’ it is clear that intellectual ability is necessary. The ‘Qualities’ suggest a picture of the desirable headteacher, namely a person that has strong inter-personal

skills, who listens to what people have to say and takes account of their ideas leading to clear and firm decisions, that the person will have considerable mental strength and be supportive of the staff and students, while having good communication skills, working hard and having high expectations of the school and those within it.

No. responses	Item
12	Listening/Open to ideas
11	Strong character
11	Decision maker
10	Approachable and accessible
10	High level people skills
8	Supportive
6	Good communication skills
5	Hard working
5	High expectations/ambitious for the school

**Table 4.4.2: Results from the group non-SLT (responses of at least 25% (5 or more)) for the theme ‘Qualities’**

Again, consideration was given to differences between TLR and MS teachers, with marginal differences being noted:

- **MS teachers:** these teachers are more likely to seek a person who has a strong character and a broad range of good people skills.
- **TLR holders:** these teachers are more likely to look for a person who is open to their ideas, responds positively to criticism, who communicates well and makes clear and firm decisions, while being supportive of them.

Taken with the differences identified for ‘Role’, the MS teachers are more likely to look for good inter- and intra-personal skills than the TLR teachers (although they were identified by TLR teachers) and the TLR teachers are more likely to seek good management skills.

Similarity can be seen between the qualities listed here (along with qualities implied by the aspects of 'Role') and those identified in Rhodes *et al* (2008). In Rhodes *et al* (2008) characteristics were identified that were indicative of leadership talent. Their study involved primary and secondary schools in a range of contexts, with three groups of staff being involved – headteacher, middle leaders and classroom teachers. The top five characteristics (good people skills, good communication skills, vision, respect of staff and respect of students (in that order)) equate well to strong people skills, good communication skills, lead (which incorporated 'vision') and figurehead (which incorporated 'respect'). This suggests that the results of this study may have implications for the identification of headteachers and also for the support of headteachers in their early years of headship. Significant similarities can also be found with the 'middle managers' list of preferred leadership characteristics found in Terrell (1997), suggesting stability over time, except for the greater expectation of participative decision-making found in this study (and also by Harris *et al* (2003)). The possible differences between TLR and MS teachers are pertinent in that they reflect differing needs (at least within the context of the schools within this study), albeit at the margin. Even so, the headteacher needs to be aware of the different needs if s/he is to enable them to perform as best they can and to maximise job satisfaction and thereby help improve student outcomes.

#### **4.4.3 A third model of Headteacher Leadership**

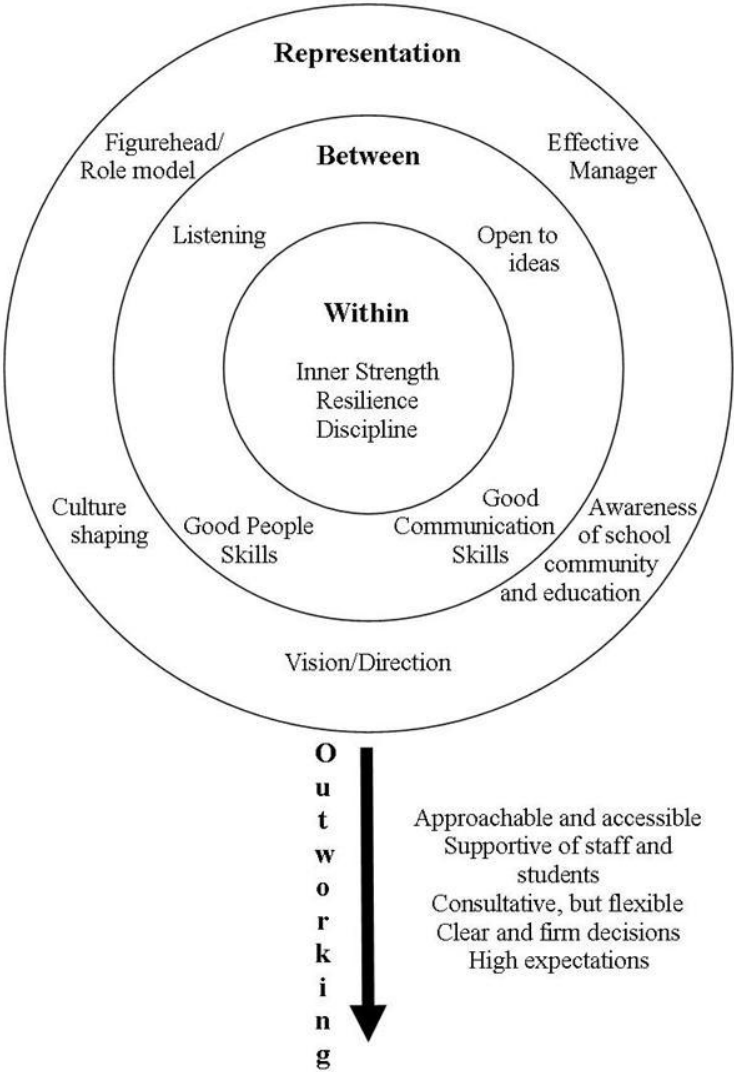
Taking 'role' and 'qualities' as a whole, a tentative model for the 'desired headteacher' can be produced. The qualities seen as desirable include strong intra-personal and inter-personal abilities, by definition the former being '**within**' the headteacher and the latter being

‘**between**’ the headteacher and the staff, students and other stakeholders. Those that are ‘within’ could be summarised as inner strength, discipline and resilience, these being implied by the phrases used by the respondents. Those that are ‘between’ include the capacity to listen to others and to be open to their ideas, good people skills and also good communication skills. These skills are demonstrated (or *represented*) through the headteacher’s role as a figurehead and her/his action as an effective manager (and therefore possessing ideas on how things can be done), along with the provision of a vision and direction for the school, plus an awareness of the school community in its entirety and education more broadly, thereby helping to shape the culture of the school. The ‘listening to’ and being ‘open to’ others is *outworked* through consultation (cf fig. 2.4) that leads to clear and firm decisions, that reflect the high expectations of the headteacher, who maintains a supportive, approachable and accessible presence, thereby ensuring the staff and students feel able to go to her/him (‘individual concern’ – fig. 2.4). All of this being backed up with hard work and leading to a settled and happy school, where the students are benefiting, the headteacher is respected and trusted, because the headteacher who validates their expectations by action has earned their trust, and the academic results are good (the “icing on the top of a good and wholesome cake” (A-HT)). This can be summarised (without the ‘outcomes’) in the model shown in figure 4.4.3.

What this model does not show are the differences seen between the TLR holders and the MS teachers, but it is incumbent on the headteacher to understand that underlying all the commonality, differences may exist. Of particular note was that the MS teachers sought in particular a figurehead who would act as a role model and who possessed very good people skills, thereby emphasising strong inter and intra-personal skills. The TLR holders, on the other hand, stressed the need for a strong leader and good manager who would support them



in their work. These are not mutually exclusive, equally it should be pointed out that both sub-groups of teachers were also after the skills especially prized by the other group.



**Fig. 4.4.3: Desired Headteacher Model**

High demands are made by the staff of their headteachers and just as the staff will not always meet the expectations laid on them, so it will be of the headteachers – but that may not mean that they are ‘bad’. An implication of the need for reciprocity may be at work here. Fig. 4.4.3 reflects strongly the ideas of ‘individual concern’, but ought that concern itself be

reciprocated? Given that high demands are rightly placed on the headteacher, ought s/he therefore be able to expect equivalent support from the staff? Arguably, once trust has been established, this may be given. To what extent is this principle reflected in schools? In training, how are student teachers helped to understand the context of their future headteachers and the role they undertake? Such understanding should probably not reduce the expectations placed on their headteachers, but it may help when it comes to making judgments.

This model of the 'Desired Headteacher' (figure 4.4.3) represents a distillation from four schools in similar contexts: it cannot be assumed that it relates beyond this context. Even so, similarity to other lists of headteacher characteristics does suggest that it may be relatable to other settings.

#### 4.5 The Three Headteacher Models – further discussion and summary

Three models of headteacher leadership have been devised from the data provided by the interview transcripts, one from each of the three groups involved in the interviews. While the models from the headteachers and non-SLT teachers betray their origins by a clear perspective, the model from the SLT members is less obviously perspectival due to its higher level of abstraction. An additional model (fig. 2.4) was generated from the literature review and was derived from the initial focus on teacher job satisfaction, the tool adopted for accessing relevant research. Fig. 2.4 proposed three principle concerns that teachers wished to see reflected in the way of working of their headteachers:

**Individual Concern** (for those with whom the headteachers work)

**Participation** (in decision making and problem solving)

**Direction** (that the school should be seen to be developing in a direction that benefits the students and not be standing still)

This is most clearly reflected in fig. 4.2.3 (non-SLT), although that model goes beyond fig. 2.4 by filling in more detail. Figs 4.3.1a&b reflect this indirectly in that they refer to expectations placed upon headteachers, which include those placed on them by their staff. Many concerns will be implied, which may differ from context to context. As such figs 4.3.1a&b are abstracted and abstracted still further in fig. 4.3.1c. All of these models provide different angles for considering headship, all asking questions of how headteachers are identified, prepared for and supported in their role.

The study supports two of Evans' (1998) concepts linked to a teacher's view of their 'ideal job', namely: relative perspective and professionalism orientation. In their consideration of

past experiences, all staff reflected on previous experiences (direct and vicarious) which were used to help them reflect on their current situations – both positively and negatively, demonstrating support for Evans’ (1998) view of relative perspective being an important concept. Her concept of ‘professionalism orientation’ did arise, albeit not as an influence on job satisfaction. The concept was raised (but not by name) by the headteachers, where it was clear that an extended orientation was expected of their staff and attributed to much of the success of their schools and the whole student orientation. The issue was not raised by the teachers as a concern, as if the orientation is a natural part of working at the schools in the study and that if it is not shared, then the school was the wrong place for the teacher. That said, the headteachers accepted that not everyone takes part in the wider life of the school, rather that most do.

While some of the staff reflected ruefully about factors outside of the school (Dinham & Scott’s (1998) *extrinsic dissatisfiers* (their second domain)) and their impact in the school, most of their concerns were focused on Dinham & Scott’s (1998) third domain – “school based factors such as school leadership, climate and decision making” (p376). As such the study showed that this is still a major concern for teachers, however the study also showed that staff were realistic and did not expect or wish to be involved in all decision making, but expected the headteacher to filter many items and deal with them by other means, or at least with a more restricted degree of participation. This flexibility is in line with Gronn’s (2009) concept of leadership configurations and was reflected in the headteachers’ interviews.

Fig. 4.4.3 refers to the two zones ‘Within’ and ‘Between’, thereby emphasising the roles of both intra- and inter-personal skills in leadership. Although it is less explicit in figs.

4.3.1b&c, it is certainly implicit in the labelling of the layers as 'Inner' and 'Outer', but by their nature they are broader in scope. While in their interviews this was also emphasised by the headteachers, indeed the view was that without such skills leadership was not possible, it was not explicitly built into fig. 4.2.3. Even so, by being built on values, from which derive both conceptualisations of leadership and philosophies of education the ideas of 'Inner' (figs. 4.3.1b&c) and 'Within' (fig. 4.4.3) are implied and inter-personal skills are implied by the comment of "Mediated through relationships", but without suggesting that good inter-personal skills were possessed. As such fig. 4.2.3 and also figs. 4.3.1a,b&c are not about good headteacher leadership, but ways of considering headteacher leadership. Fig 4.4.3, with its teacher perspective, strongly supports Evans (2000) view of teacher-centred leadership, most particularly individualism, recognition, awareness and interest, which were summed up in fig. 2.4 as 'individual concern'.

The models of headteacher leadership that have been developed do not support (or otherwise) any particular conceptualisation of leadership, but can be seen to possess elements of transformational (Leithwood *et al*, 1999) (with the strong focus on 'direction'), Servant (Greenleaf, 1970) (with the strong focus on 'individual concern') and Pedagogical (Sergiovanni, 1998) (with the strong focus on the student) leadership. Foregrounding a particular leadership theory may be an error, for the study suggests that leaders choose and are expected to be responsive to situations and be pragmatic when considered necessary (although not to the extent that it may betray transrational values). Failure to meet those expectations impacts on trust, yet if those expectations are not considered valid, then the cost of the failure to meet the expectations may be regarded as acceptable, an issue considered further in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION 2 – PERCEPTIONS AND JUDGMENTS (RQ3)**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter considers the perceptions of the participants concerning headteacher leadership at their schools. As such it is solely concerned with research question 3. Sections 5.2 (in which each headteacher is compared to fig. 4.4.3 (the staff expectations) and which includes reflections on consultation) and 5.3 set a context for sections 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6.

### **5.2 Participants' Reflecting on the Headteacher's Leadership**

#### **5.2.1 School A**

When reflecting on his work as a headteacher, A-HT saw himself as “the hero leader ... charging along at the front enthusiastically”, leading one to suspect the benign dictator (Northouse, 2004; Coulson, 1980), but this would be too simplistic a picture. While he was sure of the benefits of consultation, he was concerned that the time he wanted his staff to spend with the students could be diverted to consultative activity, impacting negatively on his educational philosophy. At the same time, he expressed a great concern to empower people, feeling that it is the way to get the most from them: “a successful teacher should be allowed to develop in whichever direction they wish”, an approach also applied to departments. There are, however, limits on this, for much of the work done with middle leaders had concerned

underperformance. This was an area in which he was self-critical, “I took too long in getting him out of the school, I think that’s a weakness”. Not a benign dictator, but certainly an element of paternalism towards both students and staff.

A-HTs reflections were mostly endorsed by his interviewed SLT colleagues, who felt he was a “strong character” (A-DH), but not autocratic. It was agreed that A-HT devolved responsibility, A-SNT suggesting that “once you have gained his trust and an element of respect from him, he will ... let you get on with it”. Neither interviewee was critical of him, feeling that “he seems to hold the balance fairly well” (A-DH).

From the TLR and MS teachers, there was some uncertainty about how successful consultation was. A-TLR2 suggested that “consultation runs through the management meetings” (leading A-MSa to suggest that “I don’t see much consultation”), but added that at times it “is clearly unedified, decisions have already been made”. A-MSb was more positive, “there’s an element of autocracy, but I certainly feel people can have their say”. If consultation through formal systems is not strong at school A, how is it that the staff appear to feel that they are listened to? The answer may lie in the way the headteacher and his SLT work with the staff: “I think one of the great strengths of here is that in this school, with this leadership, I very much feel I am a person. They do very much try to deal with me as an individual” (A-TLR2). This could be why A-HT was able to recall various initiatives that came from the staff, sometimes through his open door policy. This accessibility was seen by A-MSa as “the most defining point” and “damn useful”. His approachability and accessibility with an associated listening may also answer the question of the Chairman of the Governors “Why are the staff so loyal to the headmaster?” (as reported by A-DH). This more personal

way of working was confirmed by A-TLR2 saying that there was a “[m]uch lower profile from our headteacher here with the staff, ... that’s a personal choice in terms of where our headteacher works best, he works very well on the personal level, not so much on the big stage”. While formal systems may be unclear, perhaps weak, informal systems would appear to be strong.

In reflecting on decision making and processes, there was a feeling that there was a lack of clarity and one had to work hard to make things work. There was also a feeling that the school was behind in teaching and learning, although it was “the strongest school in terms of emphasising the vision with respect to personality” (A-TLR2). Yet despite the misgiving expressed, A-TLR2 felt that the freedom given meant that “we’re a very, very proactive school, developing lots of different ideas”, but unfortunately “we don’t all work in the same direction.”

For all the concerns raised, it was said that there was a sense of “awe” (A-MSb) about A-HT and that this typified “the way that our leader is viewed”, leading A-TLR2 to suggest that “[t]hat man I have the ultimate respect for”. The school was also felt to be “a happy establishment” (A-MSa), where staff felt supported, although there was a difference of opinion as to the effectiveness of support in the form of professional development. Trust was also seen as a “characteristic of the school”, perhaps because “it’s in his nature to be trusting” (A-TLR2).

While staff saw scope for improvements in A-HT’s running of their school, they were equally clear that they were happy and regarded their headteacher very positively. Against the



‘Desired Headteacher’ model (fig. 4.4.3) it is apparent that he is good at listening, has excellent people skills and is open to ideas, whether he is an effective manager has not been determined, but he does have a strong vision that is put across and is used to shape the culture of the school, and he is very well respected. In his style of working, while it may tend to use informal systems (which A-MSa thought was changing “thank God”) he is seen to be approachable and through that he uses the ideas of staff, letting them run with things. The decisions he makes are firm and he has high expectations of his school and staff. While he may not fulfil the entire fig. 4.4.3, because he works powerfully and successfully at the personal level he achieves considerable loyalty and respect from his school.

### **5.2.2 School B**

While expressing his ideal as “participation and consultation”, B-HT admitted that in reality “the pace of change is such that you rarely consult ... as widely and deeply as you want”, the result being that “you come across .. as a sort of dictatorial head”. Alongside this approach he wanted to be open and accessible so that “if you have a concern, that you could come and speak to me about it”. He suspected, however, that his colleagues would raise criticisms of him, in particular that he “should be more assertive at times”, although he felt he was assertive with his leadership team and that his deputy made up for any lack of assertiveness on his part on the wider stage.

As he suspected assertiveness was raised by his SLT colleagues, who thought that sometimes he was not keen to take the hard option – an example given concerned permanent exclusion. Perhaps this reflects differences in type 2 (consequences) or type 3 values. B-SLT also felt

that “he needs to be more upfront, he needs to get out a little bit more”, thereby emphasising the figurehead aspect of the role identified in figs. 4.3.1a and 4.4.3. That said, they were far from critical of his instinct for a more consultative leadership style, feeling that as a result “staff are a lot happier ... than they were” (B-AH) before B-HT arrived. On this aspect they felt that staff tended to be too department centred “whereas we have to look at the broader” (B-AH), thereby echoing Busher (2005). Since B-HT had only been in office three years, perhaps these comments reflect Schein’s (2011) view that changes in culture take time and also reflect the tension in the “paradox” of culture being both static and dynamic (Stoll, 1998, p10).

B-TLR1’s observation that “the type of staff that work in this [school] like to have their say and ... don’t like to be directed” would explain B-AH’s comment that staff were happier with current consultation than how it had been previously. She was also keen that consultation should not be on everything and that the final firm decision should lie with the headteacher, although B-MSb commented that “where there’s a bit of discontent, I think there could be a firmer line here” – back to assertiveness. She was also critical of mechanisms for consultation, feeling that it was a weakness that staff “have to take the initiative”. Even so, in general the staff gave the impression that they were listened to, that the headteacher was open to their ideas and that consultation was real.

B-HT’s strong views on the broader aspects of education, with its major emphasis on extra-curricular activity were strongly endorsed by B-TLR2b, even though this demanded an extended professionalism orientation (Evans, 1998). No criticism of this was aired, indeed it was taken for granted.

While the leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher were described as “very encouraging” (B-TLR2b), more than one person commented that the deputy possessed more of the leadership qualities they wished to see, not the least being accessibility for communication with staff. Of the deputy, not the headteacher, it was said “ultimately I respect him enough to do what he says because I trust his opinions” (B-MSa). Despite the criticisms of the headteacher, there was the feeling that the school worked well because the styles of the headteacher and the deputy “complement each other” (B-TLR2b).

The headteacher came under greater criticism from staff at B than at A, even though his style of leadership is more inclusive through formal systems and this seemed to be because A-HT is much more successful at the personal level, thereby reflecting Crawford’s (2007a) contention that relationships are at the core of every school. It is not that staff do not feel that B-HT would be supportive (“[HT] and [DH] ... will listen to you and they will try their best to help you out” (B-TLR2b)), rather that staff find him less approachable (unintentional “aloofness” as B-TLR2a put it (ascribed also to B-DH)) - perhaps it is this that hinders some communication. Even so, there was a strong feeling that it was a “happy school” (B-MSa), although “I’m not sure that is entirely down to the leadership” (B-MSb reflecting perhaps on the culture of the school), and that it is a supportive and successful school, where students are seen to be benefitting. B-HT, therefore, meets many of the aspects of the ‘Desired Headteacher’ model (fig. 4.4.3), but the fact that he does not meet all of them does not mean that staff do not feel appreciated, “generally I feel like I’m trusted to do my job well, and in that sort of atmosphere I can do my job well” (B-MSa). Failing to meet all of the aspects does

not necessarily mean one is 'bad', rather that one "could do better" as an old school report might have put it.

### **5.2.3 School C**

C-HT was resigned to the idea that no matter how hard he tried, some staff would always view the situation as 'them' (the SLT) and 'us' ("the poor bloody infantry" (C-HT)). Though feeling committed to real consultation, he was aware that some "still feel their views have been ignored" and that many look to him to "make decisions". This he felt was a paradox: "they want to be involved, yet ... want the head to take responsibility." What came across was the feeling of considerable frustration with some people: "the more reasonable I am, the more I tend to tread on personality eggshells, the more I seem to upset" – perhaps an instance of "emotional labour" (Crawford, 2007a, p90).

C-DH reflected most of what C-HT had said, feeling that consultation was for real, but added that the staff "want that genuine input, but they also want that lead". He suggested that the approach to consultation was an improvement on before C-HT's arrival, when the head and the deputy had tended to run the school themselves. He also felt that the head had been "successful at addressing the softer skills in giving the pupils a genuine feeling that they have a voice". These "softer skills" and their associated values had put C-HT into conflict with a sub-group of staff, but the impression given was that C-DH thought C-HT right in his decision not to "engage in dialogue with other people to resolve value conflicts" (Busher *et al*, 2007, p416).

Other areas of strength in C-HT were identified, but in reflecting on the SLT C-DH was not without criticism: “I think we’re too alike. I think we’re all too sensitive about other people’s feelings. I think we all three of us lose too much sleep, ..., looking at leadership as a team, I think you need somebody in that team who’s not ... gonna give a damn.” His observation of “we’re all too sensitive” is reflected in C-HT’s comment: “I get hugely upset and disappointed at any criticism” - the cost of headship (Rhodes & Greenway, 2010) might also be extended to other SLT members.

C-HT’s staff were, in general, happy with the consultation, but C-TLR2c expressed a misgiving: “the more people involved ... you just get much discussion with very little decision.” There was a desire from some staff for a more autocratic style to be displayed sometimes. Later comments suggested that they were after clear and firm decisions, the feeling being that sometimes this was not forthcoming. C-TLR2a stated that in the school there were both formal and informal consultation mechanisms and that in a smaller school “the informal way works extremely well”. He stressed that this required strong informal lines of communication which relied on good relationships. C-MSb thought the good relationships needed to be tempered with the need for the headteacher to be “separate from the staff”. This was echoed by C-TLR1, but in general he thought that C-HT was someone who “could make a decision, but still consult and is open to critical advice without flying off the handle.”

C-HT was seen to be making significant improvements in the school’s facilities, but as a result C-TLR2b thought he might be “a little bit one sided”. For C-TLR2c, C-HT’s vision and drive were at the expense of the day to day running of the school, as C-TLR1 put it “we’ve got two very strong leaders [C-HT and C-DH] ... I think it could be even stronger if

there was ... a counterbalancing manager that could pick up day to day aspects a little more proactively.” C-TLR2a also suggested C-HT was “trying to please too many people” with the result that different messages were being received, some feeling that he was being untruthful. She went on to suggest that “he’s growing into the role and is more confident in his decision making”, which to her meant that he’s “becoming a better leader” and “I’m beginning to respect him a lot more.”

A final criticism concerned C-HT’s style: “his snappy suits, his sports car rubbed a few people up the wrong way and he got a reputation for being a bit smarmy” (C-TLR2b). This reaction was put down to “a lot of older members of staff here who remember the ‘good old days’ four headmasters ago” – expectations not validated by actions (Bryk & Schneider, 2004). Perhaps in this context it is not surprising “he came under an awful lot of criticism early on in his time here” (C-TLR2c). Despite all of this criticism of C-HT, the school was thought to be happy and supportive. As C-TLR1 put it: “I’m delighted to be here and thank God for such a blessing to be in such a good school and a happy school.”

C-HT shares many of the features of the ‘Desired Headteacher’ model (Fig. 4.4.3), but not all. Consultation was seen to be a strength as was listening to others and being open to ideas, but it is possible that in that consultation there may be issues with communication and also the clarity of the final decision. While he is regarded as having strong vision, the lack of skill complementarity in the SLT meant that managerial skills were thought to be weaker than was needed, with the result that many TLR post holders felt that they are picking up too much to ensure that initiatives work. Perhaps the biggest issue was in the area of shaping the culture of the school, where he had to challenge the manner in which some staff dealt with students

(as reported by C-HT), and also his own appearance and personal style were attacked as counter to the expectations of some staff. The headteacher himself indicated that the criticisms he experienced had taken a toll on him, reflecting his need for inner strength and resilience. Despite the negativity of some, the net effect is a school with good results, where the students are thought to be benefiting, which is generally happy and where most staff appear to respect and trust the headteacher, where respect and trust may have been less so, the situation would appear to be improving.

#### **5.2.4 School D**

The instinct for consensus was seen by D-HT as indicative of his preferred leadership style, which was team focussed and which “fits in quite well with the collegiate ... atmosphere ... within the school.” Operating through teams he regarded as less isolating and ensured staff were less “balkanised”. He gave examples of how this was implemented, commenting that “effective leadership [is] built around high performance teams” which “is much stronger than the individual”. Of his SLT he commented that “we work on a consensual basis” using “a shared decision making ... model.”

He referred to what he saw as the importance of strong relationships, but was also comfortable to “stand up in front of a whole group and say ‘this is what I think we should do’”. This he contrasted with the “hero head model” which he regarded as “quite pernicious, quite damaging” as they “move those groups of staff around and manipulate them.”

Both D-DH and D-SNT spoke of mechanisms for consultation, including with the students. That consultation did not mean negotiation was made clear in D-DH's reflection on a difficult year they had experienced after introducing a raft of changes in the face of opposition from staff and (initially) students, concluding (after three terms) that "the students appreciate the changes ... and staff are coming round." There was strong agreement with D-HT's feeling that "if it was the right thing to do, you probably need to do it". At the same time, D-SNT felt that a strength of D-HT's and the SLT's approach was "seeing potential and empowering people." Linked to this, of the headteacher she commented that "he's a great encourager, a motivator ..., he won't dictate unless he has to and that's where a good leader or an excellent leader has an array of leadership skills".

Reflecting on D-HT, D-TLR1b commented "he's changed. He was a very, very democratic leader to start off with and has become more authoritarian", something with which D-HT would both agree and regret. Perhaps the strongest example of this was the set of changes introduced at the start of the academic year, but even here D-TLR1b felt that the consultation was "genuinely seen as him listening to what staff thought, while also deciding that he was determined to pursue a certain course that some people were against. So he was strong, but did show that he would consult." While in some contexts this may have produced a serious rift between the SLT (or headteacher) and the staff, D-TLR2b's comment was that "I respect that enormously", a sentiment echoed by D-MSb: "you have to take the decision you feel is in everyone's best interests ... It doesn't make you popular, but I think it makes you a good head." While some changes had brought about conflict, other changes, some of which may have been seen as controversial elsewhere were "fairly seamless" (D-TLR1b).



Departments were trusted to operate and develop without heavy oversight. This was seen as trusting and much appreciated, but D-MSa felt that D-HT was “sometimes too nice or too generous about the people that work with him ... I don’t think he will go back and check ... I think you need to do that.” She had taken part in a working party as an aspect of her leadership development and felt that she saw how the head would “put a spin on it” - he would take their ideas, but then they would be adapted to what he wanted. She wondered if the issue was about communication, something that came up later. D-TLR1a thought differently “by and large change is well managed and ... communication is not a problem”, but then added “people think they are not being informed and so whether they are or they aren’t isn’t really the point.”

For all the criticism of D-HT, there was strong affirmation of him in particular and of his SLT. D-TLR1a strongly approved of his vision, the sense that “this is what we’re about and this is what’s expected”. For D-MSb a key point was that “the leadership is very pupil oriented” adding that “I’m always happy with decisions that benefit the pupils.” Other strong endorsements were given, suggesting that for all the concerns that they perceive, the head was still well respected and trusted.

D-HT has many of the qualities seen in the ‘Desired Headteacher’ model (fig. 4.4.3), with key strengths being his vision, his personal communication and people skills, his work in shaping the culture of the school and how he consults with and supports his staff and students. The many strengths mean that even when he pushes initiatives that are contrary to the wishes of many staff, his staff still feel able to say “the staff trust him as a whole, they might get frustrated with him and they might not like some of his ideas, ... but I think ultimately they

have a lot of respect for him and what he does and I think they would follow him even if they ... weren't necessarily on board". In many ways this is similar to how A-HT was seen. In each case they had been in their schools for eight or more years and strong relationships had been established, as had strong track-records, which meant that the faults and problems staff saw were put aside and not allowed to dominate. Trust had been established over a long period by actions validating expectations (Bryk & Scheider, 2004) and perhaps expectations being altered over time, so that possible issues from reculturalisation (Glover & Coleman, 2005) over time have meant that values consonance had replaced any values dissonance that may once have been present.

#### **5.2.5 Summary**

Issues of criticism, conflict and communication were aired, some identified by the headteachers themselves, some by their SLT colleagues and others by the staff. Concern was expressed about each headteacher, but also approval, sometimes very strong approval. Notably the headteachers' SLT colleagues spoke very positively of their headteachers, a situation not found by Ribbins (1997), admittedly in a different era, perhaps reflecting that within the current national educational context the roles of SLT members have developed significantly since Ribbins wrote his paper. Additionally in at least two of the schools strong approval of the use of a more participative leadership style introduced by their headteachers was expressed.

Both formal and informal systems for consultation were seen, with the possibility that weakness in one may be offset by strengths in the other – most evident in school A. Informal

systems, however, required strong relationships and high levels of SLT, especially headteacher, accessibility and approachability, without which the ideas and views sought may not be accessed. It would be reasonable to think that consultation would be at its most effective where both systems are strong. Concerns were raised by the interviewees: a particular issue was when consultation was mainly through the hierarchical meeting system of the school – where a cascade process was expected to operate. Some staff, usually those lower in the hierarchy, questioned whether consultation was real (as seen by Tuckwell (1999)). A rival explanation may be that offered by C-HT, that when a staff member's ideas do not win the day, that member is less likely to think the consultation was genuine. This situation is reflected in table 5.2.5 which represents issues found in the study and illustrates why concentration on one mechanism may not always be advisable. The analysis begs the question of the extent to which this is also seen in a wider range of contexts and, if not, the role of context in consultation.

Consultation Mechanisms	
<b>Formal</b>	
<b>Cascade down hierarchical meetings:</b>	<b>Issue based meetings &amp; Working Parties:</b>
<b>Advantage:</b>	<b>Advantage:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• everyone can contribute</li> <li>• middle leaders trusted to raise the issues, let others express their views and report back without bias</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open Meetings: Everyone is invited to attend and contribute</li> <li>• Working Parties: Those with a keen interest are likely to join, enhancing the likelihood of success</li> <li>• The issue is not pushed out by matters 'of the moment'</li> </ul>
<b>BUT:</b>	<b>BUT:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Because the issue had been aired at an earlier meeting further up the hierarchy, it can seem that decisions have been already made or at least an opinion is being formed and openness to other possibilities may be being closed down</li> <li>• Department meetings can be focussed on</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings are often after school or at other 'free' time</li> </ul>

<p>departmental issues of the moment and the whole school issue given little or no meaningful discussion</p> <p><b>Result:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation could be seen as not genuine, particularly by those lower down hierarchy</li> <li>• Decisions can appear to be already made</li> <li>• Consultation on paper may be otherwise in reality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance is likely to be voluntary</li> <li>• Those attending are likely to have a opinion, ie the group may display a bias</li> <li>• Group leaders are very influential in shaping outcomes</li> </ul> <p><b>Result:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open Meetings: Reduced attendance and not all voices heard – not all can be there</li> <li>• Working Parties; May generate more radical solutions with possible conflict</li> <li>• ‘Notes’ of such meetings are unlikely to be read by all staff – potential communication issue – staff may feel “where did that come from?”</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Informal</b></p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 48%;"> <p><b>Advantage:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All may speak</li> <li>• The ‘quiet’ staff may speak without an audience</li> <li>• Controversial views are more likely to be expressed without fear of reaction from other staff</li> </ul> <p><b>Result:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcome may not be trusted</li> <li>• Not all views represented</li> <li>• Possible sense that the outcome was generated by a cabal</li> <li>• Outcomes may reflect a very limited set of views</li> </ul> </div> <div style="width: 48%;"> <p><b>BUT:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Likely to require staff members to take the initiative</li> <li>• Not an open process – secretive</li> <li>• Requires high trust levels to work well</li> <li>• Requires high respect levels to work well</li> <li>• Requires good access to leaders</li> <li>• Requires approachable leaders</li> <li>• Requires good relationships</li> <li>• Need to know each other well</li> <li>• May be a problem in larger schools due to potential volume of staff involved</li> <li>• Inefficient use of time</li> </ul> </div> </div>	

**Table 5.2.5: Summary of Issues linked to Consultation Mechanisms from the Study**

### 5.3 Trust and Support

B-HT, C-HT and D-HT considered that in their time they had brought about significant improvements at their schools. For D-HT, who describes himself as “tending to be on the more innovative wing”, this included three major changes at the start of one academic year as a result of which he suggested that he and the staff have had a “tiff”, commenting that while the staff could “just about cope with” one initiative, three combined “blew them away.” Despite this “tiff” D-HT suggested that: “[I] think in general still relationships across the staff are good ... and ... almost all the time there is a genuine two-way respect”. Perhaps it is the strength of the good relationships that is important to successful change management in a school that is already, in most respects, performing well. This is certainly something that, when added to trust, C-HT thought to be the case: “Providing relationships are fairly strong in the school, providing there is trust, broadly speaking, between the leadership ... and the rest of the staff. ... I think staff are fairly willing to go with that, but they do expect the leader to lead, they do expect some decision making”.

This was equally true of A-HT, who was seen as very approachable and whose door was always open. Elsewhere he confirmed that trust was present in his way of working, but to be maintained it had to be earned. This approach to trust (and departmental autonomy) was seen with all four headteachers.

The bestowing of trust, however, was not at any price. Tschannen-Moran & Hoy’s (2000) view that values are the basis for the trust judgments people make may explain the conflict experienced by C-HT with a sub-group of his teachers centred on values that were not shared.

Equally, B-HT's suspicion that his staff would regard him as being insufficiently assertive, and therefore his actions not meeting the expectations of his staff, is, if true, likely to have a negative impact on the trust some of his staff have in him (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999). For both B-HT and C-HT any 'trust' price was deemed worth paying, for to C-HT it was a question of transrational values and for B-HT it was an issue of character, for which he saw that any possible deficit would be made up elsewhere. While for both there may be negative impacts on trust, their introduction of increased participative decision making is likely to have impacted positively on trust (Moye *et al*, 2005; Yin *et al*, 2013).

D-HT's observation that "all those hundreds of interactions during the day ... are far more important than a school development plan or something like that" receives validation from Bryk & Schneider (2004) who suggest that: "relational trust is forged in daily social exchanges" (p137). Perhaps it is because of the centrality of relationships to his leadership style that despite his "tiff" with many of his staff, he still thought he was trusted. It is this same approach that underpins the style of A-HT. If that is the case, one might expect trust to be higher in schools A and D than in B and C.

In general the SLT members felt positively about issues of trust and support. When asked about how supportive his school was, A-DH commented that "that would be the nature of the ethos of the school, the culture of the school". He commented that the "overall working of the school is that of the caring environment ... they [staff and students] know that we would be willing to ... help out." He went on to explain that in so doing one would be "investing in your staff" and therefore there would be a return. A-SNT suggested that "[s]ometimes we bend over slightly too far backwards, ... but generally I think the headmaster has it about

right”. He went on to mention the various avenues that were available for staff to receive support. Given this environment, it is not surprising that of trust A-DH should say that “that’s a strength of the school” although it must be earned. Of the chair of the governors question (quoted by A-DH) “Why are the staff so loyal to the headmaster?”, A-DH reflected that part of the answer was “because he is approachable, because he’s a big character and they have a certain trust in him ... and they are willing to go with him”.

B-AH was able to provide an example to illustrate how supportive he felt his school was, adding that “I think we have a very caring staff here ... we do have a happy staff, I think it’s because we get on well with each other”. While this was not put down to the headteacher, both B-AH and B-SLT stated that as a result of changes that had been brought about by the headteacher “staff are generally happier” (B-SLT). B-SLT went on to say that it is a supportive school where “staff who want to do things are encouraged to do things”, he also stressed that “I think for the boys it is very caring”. This support went hand in hand with trust “I think there’s more trust being given to staff ... staff are feeling the shackles are being released a bit”, the result of this being that staff are empowered and treated as professional, “if they’re not doing it right that’s when you intervene” (B-SLT).

As in schools A and B, so C-DH felt that his school was supportive both personally and professionally. With regard to the latter he commented that “If they’ve got some initiative and they want to do something and run with it ... within obvious constraints they’d get backing.” Of the latter he felt that “there’s a whole community of support out there and I think the head’s at the head of that too”. When asked if that came with the headteacher he said that “[i]t is pre-existing, but part of the leader’s job is not to lose it.”

School D had been through a difficult year after the introduction of a set of major initiatives, about which many staff had been unhappy. One might therefore expect that the comments of the SLT members would be defensive. D-DH's comments tended to focus on the team that constituted the SLT, perhaps not unreasonable given the strong team focus at the school. D-SNT was more open stating that "I think it's a very happy school, I'm not sure that the people who are here realise that it's a happy school and ... how lucky they are". D-DH stressed that "I think they think we're fair and I think they think we're approachable", D-SNT added that "I do an awful lot of listening and counselling behind the scenes ... and just making things happen, which I think is very important." Despite the comparative brevity of the comments, one is left with a similar impression to that of the other three schools.

The SLT members interviewed felt that their schools were all supportive and caring environments, where trust was the norm. A question might be whether this had been helped by their headteachers or because of the established culture of the school (to echo D-HT). In the case of B-HT and C-HT, the pre-existing culture would be likely to be significant in its impact, although there is evidence that they had brought about changes through their leadership. For A-HT and D-HT, having been in post for fifteen and eight years respectively, it is difficult to know what may have been the pre-existing culture, other than to note D-HT's observation that a headteacher is likely to be regarded as a success when s/he is a good fit for the culture entered into, which is not to suggest that there cannot be subsequent changes to the culture.



In general the interviewees in the non-SLT group endorsed the positive statements of the headteachers and their SLT colleagues, feeling that “I’m trusted to do my job well” (B-MSb) and that “trust is a big thing” (D-MSa) in the school. With regard to departments, the general feeling was that “you’re pretty much trusted and allowed to work as a professional and develop your department” (D-TLR1b). There was also a feeling that this trust went both ways.

Again, staff in all schools were very much of the opinion that they were well supported personally. Most personal support came from departmental colleagues, but there was also the feeling that this would also be provided by the SLT and headteacher. Speaking of A-HT, A-MSa commented that certain personal issues had been “dealt with very delicately and he’s been very, very good.” While the overall tone of the non-SLT interviewees’ comments was very positive and echoed the feeling of the SLT, some issues were raised in all of the schools. These included a feeling that support for professional development in aspects of learning can be lacking (school A); that colleagues experiencing classroom difficulties can find it hard to secure effective help (school B); that the staffroom can be unfriendly and exhibit backbiting, although it was agreed that where someone had personal difficulties it would rally round and help (school C); and a concern that sometimes trust can go too far and that checking to see that things were done was not always carried out (school D). That said, only a minority of interviewees raised any concerns and those that were raised were not regarded as indicative of the general environment, even by those that raised them.

Evans (2000) suggested that where concern (in terms of professional and personal support) is one sided, it can lead to dissatisfaction and a lack of direction for the school, but this received

only slight support in this study. Schools A and B were the schools where some questions were raised about professional support, but such concerns were not repeated by other staff and even those that did raise the concern spoke positively of their schools.

These comments help to illustrate the generally positive environment in which the staff of the schools worked and if trust and support are partial proxies for ‘individual concern’, they echo the importance given to this aspect in fig. 2.4. Given that the schools were high achieving and faced mainly benign conditions, perhaps in the main only relatability can be sought from this study, for this general environment is not shared by all schools.

## 5.4 Judgments of ‘Success’

When headteachers considered the question of how one might judge their success as a headteacher, students’ academic achievement was very much a secondary issue. Indeed, C-HT felt he had had to move some of his colleagues away from the view of “we are judged by our results”, seeing this as “the greatest danger, an arrogance and a matching complacency”. While it was accepted, reluctantly, that one needed to keep an eye on results, their concerns were for broader measures “it’s about how happy are students, irrespective of their grades” (B-HT). C-HT suggested it was about how prepared “a young person can be for the challenge and opportunities of the next stage”, with B-HT referring to giving students “fulfilment and richness to their lives”. In A-HT’s view, if one can get the holistic aspect of a student’s school life right, then the results would follow. So for him, success is seen in students “wanting to start things themselves, run things themselves, take things further”. In the end, he felt it was “in the atmosphere of the school”. Even so, C-HT reflected back on the teachers: “it’s a judgment thing and one’s own conscience and like any teacher and most teachers I know, they’re never totally happy with what they’ve done and provided they’re always trying to improve, they’re not doing too bad a job”, but that measure of “what they’ve [the teachers] done” is against a holistic view of the student.

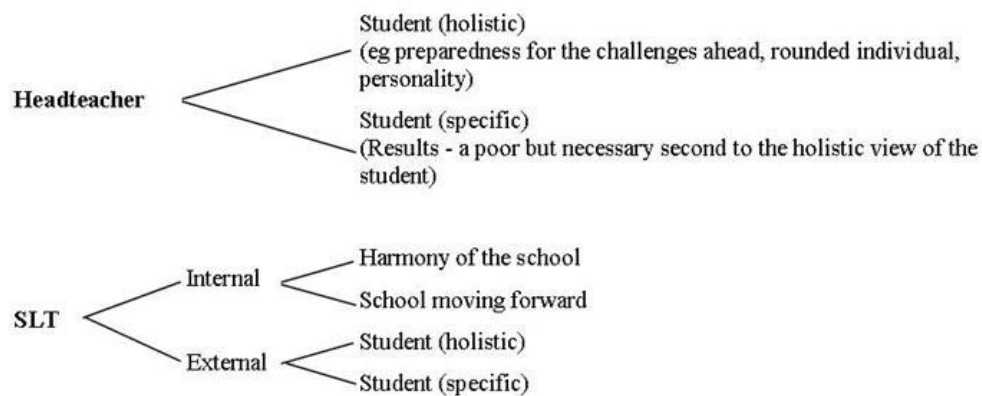
For B-AH there was a need to differentiate between success measures that were for “people outside” and those used “internally”. For those outside he suggested that “the success of a headteacher comes from the school’s examination results ... how the pupils turn out and how people outside the school see them”. As such he is encompassing both of the elements identified by the headteachers, but with a less well defined sense of what might be meant by

“how the pupils turn out”. Internally, however, he shifted the focus: “I think it’s the harmony that ... is created within the school ... how do staff feel about working in the school ... and in the long run, in terms of a vision ... has he ... got to the point where he wanted to go or heading towards that point?” The focus upon the school as a whole is also seen in B-SLT “how well the staff are together, is there a team”, “if you’ve got settled staff, happy to come to work”, “middle management who are ambitious, you’re empowering them, you’re building capacity”. This broadening of the focus to the staff can also be seen in D-SNT “it’s more than just students, a successful leader is happiness all round. How do you measure happiness?” this latter echoing D-HT’s final comment that “happiness is at the centre of it”. This idea is also seen in A-DH “a dynamic whole and see how it works”, “judging the culture” and A-SNT “I think the school is the entity”, which is an interesting reflection of D-DH’s comment that “the head is the school” and perhaps therefore to judge one is to judge the other (an issue explored later).

Other SLT members also reflected the centrality of the student: “you can only judge it on what’s coming out of the school, and the sort of personalities of the boys who leave here, ..., their values, whether they’ve attained what they want to do in life ... whether they are happy individuals who are well balanced and decent” (C-DH). While perhaps less well developed, other SLT members in other schools reflected the same concerns.

The best summary came from D-SNT “the Government has set up criteria by exam results, value-added results. I think beneath it all ... you need to have ensured that you have got ... the best out of the students, you’ve got content staff”. The focus is, therefore, on both the students and the staff. No matter how much one might wish to stress the issues that are not

results centred, there is a realisation that they must count for they are an aspect of “how the pupils turn out” (B-AH). There is no contradiction in the perspectives of the headteachers and their SLT members. While the SLT members have extended the idea to issues relating to the staff, they are in harmony with the broader concerns expressed by the headteachers. One might speculate that the extension to staff is due to their boundary position – staff are more likely to look to them for help and support and thereby speak more freely. The picture so far is summarised in figure 5.4a.



**Fig. 5.4a: Differences in emphasis in considering “success” of the headteacher**

For the non-SLT group analysis of the responses replicated the approach used with this group when considering ‘Role’ and ‘Qualities’ (chapter 4) and is therefore accompanied by the same caveats. The data generated table 5.4a, which lists the most common responses found in the interviews for the group.

The picture is that for staff ‘success’ is judged by whether a school is a happy and successful place that is getting good results and where the changes that have been made have been beneficial, especially for the students. They feel also that any judgement should be made after talking to a wide range of stakeholders.

No. responses	Item
10	Results
9	Settled/happy school
7	Beneficial change/pupils benefit
7	What is the perception of others?
4	Respect of the staff and students

**Table 5.4a: Results from the group non-SLT (responses of at least 25% (4 or more)) for the theme ‘Success’**

Most of the interviewees who included ‘Results’ in their responses did so with a degree of caution: “I think the ... results might improve by good decisions, so results can be an indicator, but I think it’s always dangerous to judge a head specifically by results” (D-MSb). As with ‘Role’ and ‘Qualities’ there were some differences in the responses from TLR and MS teachers. The greater likelihood of TLR holders including ‘Results’ as a method of judging their headteacher is likely to reflect the pressure that they feel to produce results for what will often be their own department: “if I get good results, part of it is what I’ve done, but it’s also because I’ve been encouraged ... And they are providing me with a situation that helps me to get on and do it as well as I can” (B-TLR1). The (marginal) differences are:

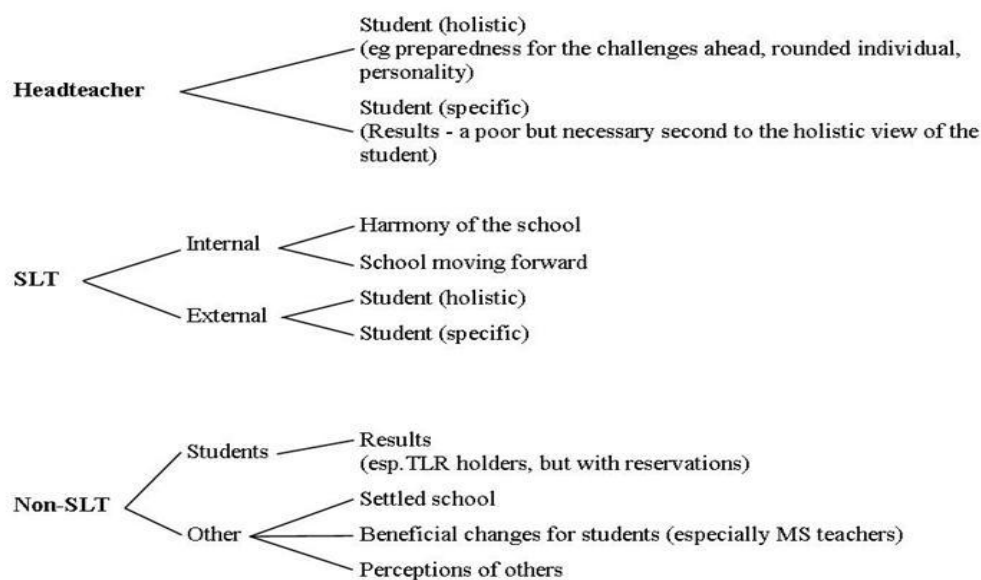
- **MS teachers:** these teachers are more likely to want to see that the pupils are benefiting from any change and also that they (the teachers) are given some leeway to get on with the job (perhaps indicative of trust). Personal contact is more likely to be important in their judgement (stressing the importance of good inter-personal skills).
- **TLR holders:** these teachers are more likely to want the results to be a factor and also for a range of stakeholders to be questioned, this latter acknowledging that results alone are not enough.

Despite the headteachers emphasising the whole-student experience in their responses, they did feel that one could not ignore the results and that “if you don’t keep your eye on that, I think it can come back to bite you” (B-HT). The inability to ‘ignore’ it would seem to manifest itself in strong pressure placed upon TLR holders, hence the high profile given to results in their responses. This is also reflected in the following comment from D-TLRa “one obvious thing is results and in a school like this there’s an awful lot of pressure on results”. This would suggest that while the headteachers and their SLT want to be judged on the whole-student product, their actions in terms of their interactions with TLR holders demonstrate the continual underlying pressure for results. This pressure appears to be less acute amongst the MS teachers, who sometimes have considerable scepticism about what results may be telling them: “results can be achieved in many ways, ... I personally find education these days ... it looks great on paper, but it doesn’t necessarily educate the child” (A-MSa). He went on to state that “to measure headteacher’s success purely by the statistical result I think is a very interesting ... concept, ... if you measure the building of the Burma railway just by the fact that it exists ... it’ll be very interesting to know ... a lot of people died in the manufacture of it: that to me is not successful.”

That the respect of the headteacher should come so far down the list (table 5.4a) may be surprising, but it was implicit in some of the responses found in ‘Role’ and ‘Qualities’. Certainly B-TLR1a saw that it has a useful outcome when things do not work out as intended: “if you have a head who has the respect of the school community, then I think if things don’t work out as planned, you can then regroup and do something about it”. Even when decisions are made that staff do not like, provided there is ‘respect’ relationships do not break down: “I do think that [HT] listens to me and I think that he listens to a lot of staff and a lot of the

decision making is delegated, but ultimately there comes a point where he has said ‘No, this is the decision and we’re gonna go for, go with it’. And I respect that enormously” (D-TLR1b), this being said despite the ‘tiff’ commented on in section 5.2.4 and elsewhere. This endorses what D-HT says and does and indicates that after a possible rough patch, relationships and trust were intact, as he suggested.

While most respondents gave single layered responses, two gave a more layered response, one reflecting B-AH’s view of success being measured differently depending on whether one was inside or outside the school. D-TLR2a went further by identifying different success criteria dependent upon the stakeholder. In almost all cases the teachers reflected the broad view of success that was seen in their SLT colleagues, but few saw it quite as broadly as their headteachers, who focussed strongly on the wider educational outcomes of the students themselves. The responses of all three groups are shown in fig. 5.4b.



**Fig. 5.4b: Headteacher success – all groups**



The development of fig. 5.4b has shown what may be thought of as the different ‘needs’ of the staff in a school – ‘needs’ in the sense that if their schools display the aspects identified then their sense of a job well done is increased and perhaps their sense of self- and collective-efficacy is enhanced. If a headteacher is to seek to motivate staff to ever higher levels of performance and improved outcomes, it is important for her/him to understand what is looked for and seek to ensure it is provided and seen, unless, of course, it is contrary to their values.

Notable in fig. 5.4b is the single minded focus of the headteachers on the students, whereas the other groups considered a broader set of indicators, while recognising the importance of the student. The headteachers’ responses to other questions, however, suggest that they judge themselves against a broader canvas than was admitted, most particularly the idea of ‘happiness’ would appear to be important to them. In fact ‘happiness’ was mentioned by all three groups, although it seemed most important to the headteachers. While no definition was given by any participant, the interviewees’ comments suggested that happiness is linked to such ideas as: successful schools, staff involvement in extra-curricular activities (extended professionalism (Evans, 1998)), busy schools, doing ‘good things’ (suggestive of a “worthy effort” (Mitchell & Willower, 1992, p14)), the school being ‘a good place to be’, and ‘settled’ schools.

While there is research about schools and happiness in relation to students (Wolk, 2008; Talebzadeh & Samkan, 2011), the comments of the interviewees would suggest that ‘happiness’ should be regarded as school wide and not just of one stakeholder group. Taking the comments of the interviewees, including the ideas associated with ‘happiness’ listed above, one sees that what is being identified is positive school culture (Mitchell & Willower,

1992; Engels *et al*, 2008; Rhodes *et al*, 2011). For Engels *et al* (2008) indicators of a positive school culture include: high commitment, high performance, shared sense of purpose and values, participative decision making, innovation and goal orientation. While it may not be true to say that all four schools share all of these aspects equally, it is certainly true that all are shared to some degree and most are shared to a significant extent. For all except school D, perhaps the weakest indicator in terms of positive school culture would be ‘innovation’ in student learning. Yet all of the headteachers shared a concern with this area and C-HT’s intervention against a prevailing sub-culture within the school, while not concerned directly with learning was certainly concerned with the student experience, plus his actions elsewhere showed innovation. The reaction of the staff could be regarded as being linked to his breach of what might be seen as an established ‘psychological contract’ (Rousseau, 1990) and the associated expectations, with a possible impact on the teachers’ sense of self-efficacy: as Engles *et al* (2008) point out “Reforms are a challenge for some and a threat to others” (p171). In the one school that displayed a high commitment towards innovation in the classroom (school D), there was probably the greatest period of staff unhappiness (up to a year for some staff members), yet the headteacher was still seen as being deeply respected and trusted – another of Engels *et al*’s indicators of positive school culture. In addition schools A and D reflect strongly Rhodes *et al*’s (2011) observation of the importance of relationships and subsequent trust to positive school culture.

Taking the explicit comments by the interviewees on judging headteacher success, plus many of their comments linked to other aspects, a framework can be developed. This framework is layered, with the base being the values and skills of the headteacher. While over time the values of the headteacher and the institution (perhaps linked to the ‘rituals’ of fig. 4.2.1c) are

likely to harmonise (through a mixture of acculturation and cultural evolution), at least initially (perhaps for years) the institutional values will also play a part in the base. These skills and values will work their way out through a way of working - there is a direct link here to fig. 4.2.3 (the headteacher's 'Values to Action' model). Strengths and weaknesses at this level will have a consequence at higher levels. The way of working is linked to what might be regarded as a style which would also reflect the values at the base and these in turn show themselves in aspects of the school climate, with the final outworking being linked to judgement. Taking the lead from some of the interviewees' comments, the resulting framework explicitly links the degree of headteacher success with school success and judgements thereof. This link may increase as the headteacher's period in office increases. The framework is shown in table 5.4b.

<b>Level 4 (Judgement)</b>	Student – holistic, specific (results) School – harmony, ‘happy’, moving forward, opinions of others outside school		
<b>Level 3 (aspects of climate)</b>	Academic/achievement orientation; innovation; sense of purpose; worthwhile cause		Positive Culture
<b>Level 2 (impact of the way of working)</b>	Collaboration + Trust + Flexibility (structure, leadership configurations)	Sense of Community	
<b>Level 1 (ways of working)</b>	Relationships + Challenge + Support		
<b>Ground Level</b>	Values of the Headteacher and the Institution; Skills of the Headteacher	Link: HT Values to Action	

**Table 5.4b: Layered Internal view of Headteacher/School Success**

Table 5.4b attempts to bring together the responses of the various groups in the schools and, using the work of Rhodes *et al* (2011), Engels *et al* (2008) and Mitchell & Willower (1992), link it to aspects of positive culture and a school's sense of community. It indicates therefore

how judgments of those internal to the school community can arise. Underlying this framework are questions of headteacher leadership and management, for at each level these will be reflected, as will the leadership and management of others at the school. Level 1 is intended to build upon the values and skills of the headteacher and the institutional values. It is on the basis of relationships and values that trust is developed (Maele & Houtte, 2012; Bryk & Schneider, 2003; and Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000), without which the aspects of level 3 (all associated with a positive culture (Engels *et al* (2008), as are ‘collaboration’ and ‘flexibility’) would not be possible. While the framework reflects the formation of judgments by those internal to the school, some of the teachers were aware that for those external to the school the basis may be different, in particular that results would play a larger part along with direct experience of the school’s students in the community at large.

B-HT’s suggestion that results could “bite you” implies that the major accountability system in England, inspection by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), focuses on results as being an indicator for all else that a school may do and that the results drive the inspection. If, therefore, ‘process’ implies ‘results’ (as A-HT indicated), does that mean ‘results’ implies ‘process’? A-MSa would suggest not. What table 5.4b does not say is what the measure of ‘results’ may be and the validity of any process used to generate the measure. It follows that the implications from ‘results’ or ‘not results’ may depend upon one’s view of the validity of the process for generating the measure of ‘results’ and how the measure is used for historical or school to school comparison.

Apart from raising questions of how judgments are made by those internal and external to a school, this framework also asks questions relating to headteacher professional identity (PI)

and self-efficacy. To what extent is it true to say, as D-DH did, that “the head is the school” ( $HT \equiv Sch$ )? If it is true, or at least accepted by the headteacher, then a judgment on a school is a judgment on the headteacher and vice versa. Headteacher PI addresses the question “What does it mean for me to be the headteacher of this school in this context now and in the future?”, thus as well as being professional it is also personal and about what the person sees as relevant (Beijaard *et al*, 2004). Although there is a relational element (Beijaard *et al*, 2004), in the end the headteacher will generate ‘my’ PI (MPI). If  $HT \equiv Sch$  is not accepted by the headteacher but is accepted by others, then a conflict exists between MPI and how others see ‘my’ PI should be (this could be called **ascribed** PI (API) and represents an expectation). Where  $MPI \neq API$ , this may be at most a mild irritation or even irrelevant, depending upon who it is that is responsible for the API. If a positive judgement is made on the school and ascribed to the headteacher, there may be a glow of appreciation and perhaps the headteacher will ascribe the accolade to others. If it is a negative judgement on the school that is ascribed to the headteacher (via API), which could even lead to the loss of one’s job, the situation is different. Consideration of principal self-efficacy (PSE) models may help to understand the situation. PSE is a little researched field (Fisher, 2014), but what has been done has tended to yield different models offering a different number of dimensions of PSE that tend to be country specific (for example: Tschannen-Moran & Gareis (2004) – American – three dimensions; Federici & Skaalvik (2011) – Norwegian – nine dimensions). Starting with the PSE Scale of Brama & Friedman (2007) (cited in Fisher (2014)), Fisher (2014) suggested a two-layered model of PSE, the first layer being three dimensions (different to Brama & Friedman’s (2007) own) and a second layer of three levels of conditional control – one being maximum and three being minimum. It may be that for the headteacher,  $MPI \neq API$  because even though s/he may feel the skills are possessed, s/he may feel that the levels of control for

some aspects of the API are too low for any subsequent accountability to be accepted. S/he may feel that for those aspects of the API, locus of control has been externalised, even though for much else it is internalised – this may represent a personal strain. If accountability based on the API brings negative consequences, the reaction is likely to be emotional and perhaps damaging to the sense of self-belief or at least self-esteem (“positive feeling about one’s worth and value” (Rhodes, 2012, p439)).

There may be a link here to the ‘mantle’ (fig. 4.3.1b) and ‘rituals’ (fig. 4.3.1c), elements of which may generate an API. The process of acculturation may be important for helping the headteacher or potential headteacher to feel able to accept that API, leading to assimilation (MPI=API) and subsequent actuation from within a confirmed PI. There are implications here for headteacher preparation, identification and support.

## 5.5 Communication

Of communication, D-HT stated the importance of “the messages you’re communicating ... and the set of values they bring with them”. Yet despite this emphasis, communication was identified by D-DH as a problem: “I think there’s always scope for more communication ... you can communicate, but it doesn’t mean the message you are sending is the one that’s being received”. D-SNT identified another barrier to communication, one that is between teachers: “if you are found wanting, ... there is less tolerance for you and that does come over as arrogance.”

Even though C-DH thought that under his headteacher communication had improved, he too recognised that there was an issue, the “communication conundrum”:

“you’ll always meet that communication conundrum – ‘I wasn’t informed’, ‘Well actually we did hold a meeting’, ‘Oh, there are too many meetings’, ‘Well we put it up as a notice’, ‘I can’t read all those notices’, ‘We put it in your pigeon hole’, ‘I’ve got too much bumf in my pigeon hole, I’m not informed’, you know there are some people who are resistant to being informed.” (C-DH)

He was also willing to admit that mistakes were made: “we can all make mistakes, ... particularly the downward communication we can forget, and on some occasions staff feel left out because it’s too early in the process to let them know”. This same issue was identified by B-SLT “perhaps staff aren’t sometimes told quick enough the reasons why, why this is happening”, thus there is a degree of omission, which may have been because it was “too early” and then got forgotten. But B-AH thought that sometimes there were issues, particularly relating to national matters such as new legislation, about which one would expect staff to keep themselves informed: “but it doesn’t always happen. So maybe there’s a lack of communication there.”

A-DH was aware that while “people have the potential to be more aware” and that “people ought to be aware of what is happening”, due to a “tyranny of emails” it was not so simple: “the challenge to us at the moment is not to assume that because you’ve sent off an email you’ve communicated. That actually the person you’ve sent it to has however many other emails they’re going to skim through, and that’s not necessarily communication. Quite how we solve that, I’m not sure.”

In general there is no blame game here, rather a variety of communication failure issues were identified:

- Perception - how a message was received was not necessarily as it was conceived (for example: misinterpretation or “I thought it didn’t mean me” (D-DH)).
- Barriers - for example, between staff.
- Resistance - to being informed (perhaps even deliberate avoidance).
- Omission - by sender (for example, forgetting or being slow to inform).
- Busy - staff are very busy and miss things.
- Expectations – misplaced or erroneous expectations.

Certainly the members of the SLT were unsure how to resolve the “communication conundrum” (C-DH) and did not downplay the issue. Tschannen-Moran & Hoy (2000) state that “[t]rust is necessary for open communication in an organisation”. The corollary may be that where communication fails trust is a likely casualty.



Non-SLT comments about communication ranged from “staff are kept very well informed of what’s going on” (B-MSa) to “I’d say it’s erratic” (D-MSa), with the greatest concern being expressed by mainscale (MS) teachers. There was an acceptance from several that email had meant that information was being given, but even so there were a range of feelings around this. A-TLR2 was happy that email “is for the most part very effective”, whereas in the same school A-MSa felt swamped by it “everything seems to be coming down, ... it takes me twenty minutes to sort through my email in a morning”. His concern was that it reduced the time he had for preparation of lessons and also that there was a subtext that having sent an email “if you haven’t read it then it’s your fault”. He allied this problem to what he felt was not enough discussion on initiatives at the school with the result that “a piece of paper arrives or an email arrives and I think ‘Where’s this come from?’, you know, ‘I don’t remember this’.” D-TLR1a, who has had a period of secondment to the SLT and felt she can see things from both sides, understood that SLT might say “well we announced this, we did tell you about it, we talked about it”, but “from the staff perspective people forget, or they weren’t listening in the first place or they’ve only chosen to hear what they want to hear.” She accepted that in her school “there is still work to do on the issue”, but did not provide the answer.

D-MSb (a newly qualified teacher (NQT)) felt that sometimes communication is a problem when there are too many layers of management, so that then information is lost on the way down, but both he and D-MSa expressed one large issue of concern: “a lot of it is based on things that have happened before” and becomes taken for granted. Two problems are identified with this, firstly that those who are new do not know what has gone before and how it is supposed to be dealt with and secondly, perhaps what went on before is not a good fit for

now and can itself lead to communication problems. In the latter category he referred to arranging events, where he felt there was insufficient oversight leading to people not knowing what was happening, or a clash of events. These comments were from staff who in general showed considerable goodwill towards their schools and what they sought to do.

An example of the “communication conundrum” (C-DH) was seen with A-MSa, who felt that there were too many emails, but a little later suggested “I personally would prefer to see an awful lot more basic information being shared”, which would mean more reading through emails or pieces of paper or more listening. In turn this brings one back to D-DH’s issue of whether one is communicating when one thinks one is, or as C-TLR2a put it “people can sometimes believe they are communicating, but they may not be communicating.” He suggested that “sometimes clearer guidelines on who, what, when, where, why and clearer objectives in terms of planning would help.” This may well help address some of D-MSb’s concerns, but does not help when “I just listen out to what my head of department or other heads of department ... are saying” (C-MSa), thereby ensuring that it has been filtered and that the original emphasis may have changed.

The following issues, related to communication, came from the non-SLT interviewees’ comments:

- There is too much information – it detracts from other things.
- There is too little information.
- Getting the timing right.
- Cascading information down the management hierarchy can mean it gets blocked or altered.

- Forgetting, or otherwise failing, to communicate.
- Forgetting the message.
- Lack of clarity in the message.
- False assumptions made.
- The person who avoids being informed.
- Inadequate procedures/guidelines.

Despite their efforts, not one of the schools in the study had solved this problem, although all had some contented teachers. The first two items in the list above reveal what a conundrum this is, however the final point may well indicate a partial way forward. When added to the observations of the SLT (with ‘Technological’ being added by the researcher), the framework of table 5.5a may be generated:

<b>Barriers to communication:</b>	
Disposition:	(of staff – resistance, too busy, expectations, forgetting, ...)
Quantity:	(too much, too little, adequacy, ...)
Quality:	(accuracy, timing, avoiding misperceptions, ...)
Procedures/Guidelines:	(unclear, taken for granted, dated, cascade failure...)
Technological:	(not shared, malfunctions, ...)

**Table 5.5a: School based barriers to communication**

That communication appears difficult to get right in the eyes of everyone is apparent (as Butt *et al* (2005) found), but equally there is a cost in not getting it right. Tschannen-Moran (2004) reminds us that “teachers see principals as trustworthy where this communication is both open and forthcoming” (p26). The same may be said of communication between any two individuals – vertically or horizontally. If that trust can be brought about, then

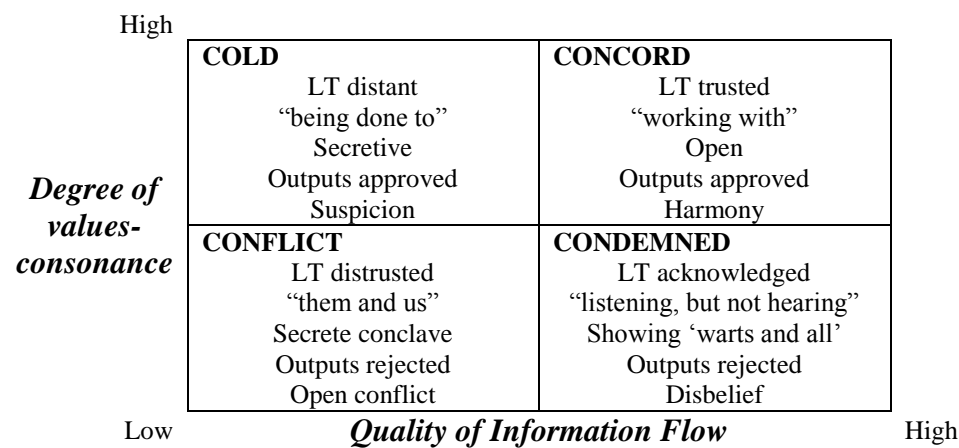
participative problem solving is more likely to be facilitated (Bryk & Schneider, 2004), along with the improved solutions sought by the headteachers.

The situation appears to be more complex than was seen by De Nobile & McCormick (2008b), where open communication, “supportive and democratic communication” (p105) and the “adequacy of communication” (p109) were all seen to be positively related to teacher job satisfaction. The barriers identified in this study suggest that the systems can be thought to be open and ‘supportive and democratic’ and for there still to be problems, for staff dispositions need also to be accounted for, as do procedures, which may be taken-for-granted or found wanting. For De Nobile & McCormick (2008b) it was also the case that communication load (“quantity” in the table above) was not a significant issue, but this study found that for staff within the same school there can be both too little and too much. Perhaps this is a dispositional issue (maybe linked to professionalism orientation (Evans, 1998)), or perhaps the real concern is ‘adequacy of communication’, which may be different for different people at different times, thereby making institutional solutions harder to achieve.

In schools A and B, supportive communication from the headteacher downwards was a strong feature, perhaps this is a reason for fewer strident concerns being expressed on this issue by their staff. Even so, De Nobile & McCormick’s (2008b) definition of ‘adequacy of information’ involves staff perception and as D-TLR1a pointed out: “people think that they are not being kept informed and so, whether they are or they aren’t isn’t really the point.” Also in school D the validity of some participatory decision making was questioned, thereby raising a question mark over ‘democratic information’. Perhaps this helps to explain some of the strong misgivings expressed about communication at the school, although, interestingly,

they also expressed enormous respect for and trust in their headteacher. It is of little consolation to know that in Weindling & Dimmock’s (2006) longitudinal study of headteacher careers, communication was found to be a concern both at the start of headship and ten years on.

In chapter 2, fig. 2.3.4 speculated a connection between the degree of values consonance between the staff and the SLT and the quality of the information flow.



**Fig. 2.3.4: Speculative link between SLT-Staff values-consonance and information flow, in the manner of Wallace (2002, p182)**

School A was seen to have high values consonance and reasonable information flow, although the communication system was not without criticism. There was no doubt that the SLT were trusted and that there was considerable harmony at the school, with ‘Concord’ being an apt description of the prevailing situation.

School B was the school with the least amount of concerns expressed by the non-SLT group about communication and it had high values-consonance, such that ‘Concord’ would be an

appropriate descriptor. Even so, there was a slight hint of wariness, but not quite distrust, of the headteacher because of elements of his style and a degree of “aloofness” (B-TLR2a).

School C probably saw the widest range of opinions with regard to their headteacher, but this was partly to do with confronting a sub-culture and partly because of his personal style, plus a feeling that he tried to please everyone and produced sometimes unclear decisions. For some, therefore, there was a degree of values-dissonance, although this was not the majority, and for some others a degree of wariness that was close to distrust. As a result, while ‘Concord’ would be an appropriate overall descriptor, it was nearer to ‘Condemned’ with some staff than in either schools A or B.

School D saw little or no values-dissonance, but there was a clash in terms of how change was to be implemented and its speed. This was also the school with most concerns about communication and the quality of the information flow. Yet while, for a period, there was conflict and a feeling with some staff of ‘them and us’, it was not long lasting because the SLT were seen to be responding to some concerns and attempting to support them. In addition the headteacher was highly respected and trusted. At the time of the study ‘Concord’ would be the right descriptor, but eight months earlier it may not have been the case.

While schools A, B and C would lend an element of validity to the link represented in fig. 2.3.4, school D shows its limitations. The dynamic and sometimes rapidly changing nature of schools can mean that it is not able to cope with the ephemeral nature of feelings, which can flare up and then calm down in a short period of time and where reactions are often linked to the pressures of the moment. Fig. 2.3.4 cannot respond at that level and must, at best, be an

attempt to show a link that represents an average over time. Yet even then it is limited because it does not show how important relationships are, relationships such that even though one may disapprove of a change, because of the trust and respect that has been developed over time, 'Concord' still prevails.

While the schools in this study suggest the limitations of this link, the anecdotes from staff of previous school experiences, may reinforce the element of validity. One teacher (B-MSb) referred to a headteacher from her past known as 'Hitler' for which 'Cold' would have been almost too positive a descriptor and yet another (C-MSb) referred to a headteacher who "destroyed the school" and who "wouldn't listen to anyone", for whom 'Conflict' would have been the correct quadrant. Further examples from the teachers could be given, but it can only ever be an indicator that the link has a degree of validity, for the staff anecdotes are seen through their eyes and one cannot know the validity of their perceptions in terms of their more general currency. What fig. 2.3.4 implies is that headteachers need to be aware of the consequences of how they act, why they act as they do and how staff can be kept informed and involved, if they are to increase the effectiveness of their schools and their staff.

## 5.6 Issues of Conflict

All four headteachers reflected that sometimes what one would wish to do cannot be done. This was expressed most particularly in terms of consultation on initiatives, where ‘pressures’ lead to pragmatism. Sometimes, however, it was because of the primacy of the philosophy of education over the conceptualisation of leadership, especially as one progresses in headship: “I think a few years down the line, it gives you that bit more confidence to say, ‘look I really feel this is the right thing to do, your objections are noted, but we’re still going to do it’” (D-HT), a sentiment shared by the other headteachers and reflecting a possible drift towards greater autocracy that can come with increased experience (Day & Bakioğlu, 1996). Pragmatism is, therefore, important, but so is an educational philosophy, with three of the headteachers agreeing that “if you feel it was the right thing to do, you probably need to do it” (D-HT), which need not mean one does not consult: “there will be conflict and confrontation occasionally, yes, and you will sometimes push things through possibly against the view of many others. But it is very important to be aware of the consequences of that” (C-HT), the latter suggesting the need to manage the subsequent situation and not ignore it.

This conflict was commented on by all of the headteachers, but more so by D-HT. Despite conflict, he felt that relationships were good and that there was considerable trust, thereby reflecting Bryk & Schneider’s (2004) observation that “trust grows over time through exchanges where the expectations held by others are validated” (p137). In other words D-HT’s established track-record had helped to build up considerable trust from his staff, which was able to overcome the impact of their “tiff”. Of course, further “tiffs” would eventually become a new track-record, which could have a longer term impact on trust. C-HT referred to



problems in handling what he saw as unacceptable practices perpetrated by some of his staff, mostly longer serving staff. As such he might be seen as challenging an aspect of a sub-culture, or at least the values of a sub-group of staff. B-HT has freely commented that he thought some of his staff would wish to see him as more 'assertive', an observation confirmed in subsequent interviews.

The evidence might suggest that conflict with the headteachers comes from at least three causes: values, actions and expectations (table 5.6a). The scope for conflict would seem to be legion. A-HT was clear about the primacy of his 'philosophy' over his 'conceptualisation', something for which he did come under some criticism from some staff. B-HT experienced some criticism and minor conflict from the expression of an aspect of his character. C-HT's values conflict was reflected in his actions against a sub-culture. D-HT experienced considerable conflict as a result of his actions, which originated from the primacy of his 'philosophy' over his 'conceptualisation'.

In the eyes of those staff interviewed, each headteacher displayed strengths and weaknesses, with many of the elements of the 'Desired Headteacher' model (fig 4.4.3) being evident in each case. Of note is that the greatest approval seemed to be given to those headteachers who had served for the longest period (A-HT and D-HT), even though A-HT appeared to have the least effective formal systems for participative decision making (preferring the personal approach) and D-HT had introduced three significant changes at the same time against the wishes of many of his staff. Of the four headteachers, these two appear to be much more effective at the level of personal relationships and working with staff as individuals, thereby

validating Fullan's (2003b) view that emotional intelligence is at least and perhaps more important than the best ideas in bringing about school improvement.

<b>Causes of conflict:</b>	<b>Exemplified by:</b>
Values dissonance	C-HT and the treatment of students by certain staff
Actions (innovation)	D-HT introducing major changes contrary to the wishes of many staff
Expectations (not met)	B-HT perceived as insufficiently assertive B-HT perceived as too office bound C-HT perceived as making insufficiently clear decisions C-HT's personal image and style

**Table 5.6a: Causes of conflict as identified by the headteachers**

What is clear is that it is not as simple as table 5.6a would suggest, for conflict and the consequences of that conflict would seem to be powerfully influenced by the way in which the headteacher operates – relationships, being a basis for trust (Maele & Houtte, 2012), appear to be all important. Even though B-HT and C-HT would acknowledge the importance of relationships, B-HT was seen as less accessible and approachable thereby hindering the establishment of relationships, while C-HT's actions in confronting unacceptable staff behaviour brought about an element of distrust with some of his staff before he could build the relationship. The early values-dissonance with some (but far from all) staff and his failure to meet the expectations of style and image with staff identified as "conservative", resulted in early distrust from some, such that managerial issues at SLT level (resulting from a lack of

skill complementarity) were seen as a reason by some to question his competence. Despite these early setbacks, trust and respect were seen to grow as a result of positive outcomes to actions and initiatives – the establishment of a track-record. Relationships are all important, but so too is a good track-record, both of which impact on trust and can ameliorate conflict.

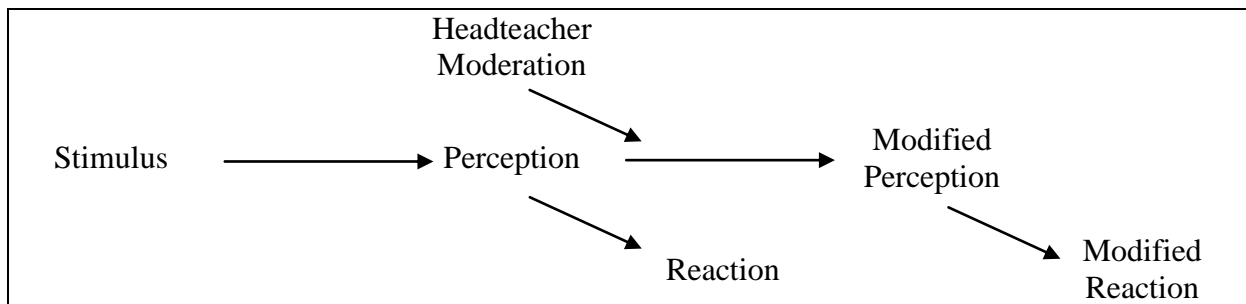
Change, whether it is innovation or values based, can cause conflict partly due to its impact on a teacher's sense of self-efficacy. In Tschannen-Moran & Hoy's (2001) model of teacher self-efficacy three domains were identified, namely efficacy for: student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. C-HT may have impacted on at least two of these domains by attempting to change a sub-culture, while D-HT may have impacted on all three. The result need not be negative, but for both of these headteachers it certainly was. Perhaps one reason for a more limited (although at the time it was strongly felt) negative impact at school D was not just the trust established by D-HT over a lengthy time, but also that his SLT realised that it was necessary to support the teachers so that they could engage positively with the change, thereby helping to re-establish their sense of self-efficacy. Helping to re-build self-efficacy contributes to building the enthusiasm of teachers for their job, their commitment to teaching and thereby their job satisfaction (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001) and onwards to student standards (Kurt *et al*, 2012). There are implications here for the management of change, but it is possible that for C-HT, no matter what support was given to the teachers he had challenged, because his issue was at the level of transrational values it may have been seen as an attack on the teachers own professional-identity and therefore an attack on themselves as individuals: the result is likely to have been an emotional reaction. Such changes also represent a loss of locus of control (defined by Crossman & Harris (2006) as "the extent to which individuals believe in their ability to control aspects of

their life”, p31). Change can be a challenge and how one reacts to it may depend upon the extent to which it is seen as a threat or as a development opportunity. Teachers who see the locus of control as internal (controlled by their own action) are likely to see it as an opportunity and thereby embrace the support provided (as in school D) to help re-establish their own sense of control. Given the finding of Judge & Bono (2001) that locus of control is linked to job satisfaction, it is important that the support is provided. That school D is a school where trust and respect is the norm and where innovation is, by and large, accepted, all indicating a positive climate, maybe this is the reason for change being (reluctantly in a few cases) accepted within a relatively short time span (Furnham & Drakeley, 1993). This, perhaps, can be contrasted by the more conservative climate of school C. Perhaps especially at school C, the challenge may also have been seen as a breach of the psychological contract (Rousseau, 1990) between the school and the teacher and as such a major breach of the teachers’ expectations of the headteacher and therefore a major breach of trust. Table 5.6b summarises this situation.

<b>Causes of Conflict</b>	<b>Perceptions</b>	<b>Leadership Moderating Practices</b>
<b>Values</b> Type 3 – basic beliefs Type 2a – consequences Type 2b – consensus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attack on my values</li> <li>• Attack on my professional identity</li> <li>• Attack on my sense of self-efficacy</li> <li>• Breach of the Psychological Contract</li> <li>• Breach of trust</li> <li>• Loss of locus of control</li> <li>• Failure to act/be as a headteacher ought</li> </ul>	Strong positive relationships  Strong support  Positive track-record
<b>Actions</b> Innovation/change		
<b>Expectations</b>		

**Table 5.6b: Conflict Framework**

Diagrammatically this can be represented in fig. 5.6. Of course, this is not a closed system and therefore other inputs are possible, which could work to exacerbate or ameliorate a situation leading to greater or reduced conflict. In schools B and C, there was evidence of input to the system which exacerbated conflict. However, the study found that there were three forms of moderation that the headteacher could exercise, two of which were pre-existing (strong positive relationships and positive track-record) and one of which is an action of the time (appropriate support), which would help to ameliorate conflict. In school D all three of these were found and over time they worked to reduce significant conflict.



**Fig. 5.6: Conflict Model**

Two forms of support can be identified. The first is a modification of the change in the light of staff responses (this was seen in school D). The second is support to help staff adjust to or cope with the change. The evidence from school D is that support after the stimulus can be effective, but it is reasonable to suggest that if support is to be offered it should be thought about before the stimulus is introduced so that it is ready for when the change is made operational. It is possible that no support is to be offered, but that should be a definite decision (this was seen in one school). Where a headteacher is new to a school and wishes to introduce change quickly, the only moderation possible may be support, unless a positive track-record is made known to the staff beforehand.

Perhaps a way in which developed trust and respect (based on strong positive relationships and a positive track-record) may help avoid some of the negative issues of conflict arising from change is through what might be called **vicarious-efficacy**, which could be defined as a form of efficacy based on a belief (founded on trust, respect and track-record) in the efficacy of the headteacher. Vicarious-efficacy may mean that the member of staff is confident that by working with the leader of the change, while in the short term self-efficacy may be reduced and locus of control reduced, they will be restored and possibly enhanced. There is a sense in which the locus of control was not removed but was handed over in order to be handed back once the self-efficacy and professional identity have been restored. The issue becomes not ‘Do I believe I can do this?’ (self-efficacy), or ‘Do I believe we can do this?’ (collective-efficacy), but ‘Do I believe s/he can help me to do this?’ (vicarious-efficacy). If the answer is ‘yes’ then conflict is reduced and trust is increased if the belief is well placed.

It is usually incumbent on a headteacher to be aware of actions that may generate conflict and to seek to reduce any resulting conflict, so that the change being sought is more likely to be successful. This means engaging with staff and working with them. Table 5.6b seeks to help this by aiding the understanding of the causes of conflict, including staff perceptions, and how leadership can moderate any negative impact, thereby increasing the chances of successful change. This is not a framework that can be applied to schools in high stress situations, such as Special Measures, where the need for urgent change is more likely to be evident.

## 5.7 Summary

While SLT members were not uncritical of their headteachers, there was strong approval of what they had done and how they had done it, which was in marked contrast to Ribbins (1997). This was less the case with the non-SLT interviewees, although even so there was a high degree of approval of their work. Notable issues identified concerned consultation, headteacher 'success', communication and conflict. Trust and support was also explored

In at least two of the schools the increased emphasis on **consultation** and participative decision making was applauded by all interviewees, with the caveat that it should not be on everything and that the final decision and the responsibility should lie with the headteacher, that decision being firm and clear. This aspect of 'responsibility' was a cause for concern with the headteachers and their SLT colleagues. Within the schools two approaches to consultation were seen: informal and formal, with some schools tending to emphasise one rather than the other. Advantages and disadvantages of both were perceived (table 5.2.5), in particular the informal system requiring high levels of trust and respect of the headteacher (or consultation leader) along with significant accessibility and approachability. Failure in this regard would call into question the validity of the process. Even so, the informal system could be seen as secretive and open to abuse, which was less so with formal systems, although they also possess weaknesses. Strength seemed to lie in a mixed system, as in school D, but that required trust and respect to have been established, with an associated track-record. As such a mixed system was more suited to a headteacher who staff regard as proven, rather than a new headteacher.

High levels of **trust and support** were reported and appreciated at all four schools. One of the manifestations of this was that departments were expected to implement what was asked of them and as long as they met the required standards they were left alone. In at least one school it was suggested that follow-up to ensure that the implementation was done did not happen. The point was that checking up did not imply a lack of trust, yet it seemed that there may have been some reluctance to do this. Perhaps this is one reason why in at least two schools there was the feeling that the classroom experience, in particular that of learning, had not kept pace with other schools – one expression of this was a perceived lack of support for professional development or perhaps that because staff were less aware of what happened at other schools (the issue of insularity), they did not know how learning had progressed elsewhere and therefore what the possibilities might be. This could be another expression of the conservatism seen in three of the schools. That it need not be the case was clear from school D, whose headteacher was regarded as innovative and results had increased during his period of office.

Given that all four schools had been deemed as ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’ by Ofsted, yet with conservative approaches to learning in some, at least two questions arise:

are Ofsted judgments heavily results driven and therefore downplay any other issues they may see (if they are seen), thereby reducing the validity of their judgments?

**or** were the teachers who expressed concern about learning overstating the issue?

These questions cannot be answered by this study.

While superficially it is easy to say that a headteacher’s ‘**success**’ can be judged by the students’ results in external exams, the responses from the participants in this study would



disagree. Headteachers comments on this issue focussed on a holistic view of the students, but their comments elsewhere, particularly about ‘happiness’, showed that their concern was wider and more in line with their teachers and SLT colleagues. A framework (table 5.4b) was developed that showed that the question of headteacher ‘success’ was linked to both ‘sense of community’ and ‘positive climate’. In discussing the consequences of “the head is the school” (D-DH), the concept of **ascribed professional identity** (API) was introduced, followed by a discussion of the possible impact of API (particularly when MPI≠API) on negative accountability judgments and the consequences for the headteacher.

Some staff suggested that the question of ‘success’ needed to consider if the measurement is by those internal to the school or external. The framework (table 5.4b) was derived from responses concerning an internal assessment of ‘success’ – what staff felt about the question and its impact on them, thereby linked to job satisfaction and ultimately to standards. Is there, therefore, no real difference between the complex framework offered and a simple focus on results (the “icing on the top of a rich and wholesome cake” (A-HT)) – get everything else right and the results follow? Do results mean the process is right or can good results follow from poor process? Some participants suggested that, while linked, they are not the same, the counterexample being the building of the Burma railway (A-MSa). This distinction may not always be evident in the pronouncements made by prominent groups outside of schools. What lies at the bottom of the debate may be the question of values and what it is that education should seek to do. Questions arise, including:

- What is the purpose of education?
- How can stakeholders be helped to agree on the purpose or can’t they?

- How can different stakeholders be helped to understand the viewpoints of other stakeholders?
- To what extent are formal school accountability processes (such as Ofsted inspections) driven by external exam results?
- Does process matter?
- How can headteachers be prepared for engaging in this debate at their schools, locally and nationally?
- What support do headteachers need as they grapple with the complexities of ‘success’?
- What are the costs to the headteacher of identity (at least in the eyes of some others) with the school?
- How can headteacher self-efficacy be supported/developed both before taking headship and once in headship?

It was clear from the study that **communication** was an issue, but no solution was offered. Five barriers to communication were identified (table 5.5a), all of which could impact on trust and respect. Yet for all the concern expressed in some schools, all of the schools had a positive climate and the headteachers were generally given approval by staff, sometimes strong approval (schools A and D), even where the greatest concern about communication was expressed (school D). Perhaps the strong downwards ‘supportive’ communication from B-HT may indicate an approach that helps. One might, however, have expected the strong emphasis on relationships and interaction (strongly approved features of A and D, less so of B) to have had a significant effect on school D, the school where the greatest communication concerns were raised. Headteachers need to be aware that this is an on-going issue

(Weindling & Dimmock, 2006) that is not likely to go away. Advice to headteachers might include ensuring that all standard procedures and guidelines are revised to ensure they are fit for purpose and are known, that lines of communication are open, and that communication is adequate in terms of quality and quantity – easier said than done.

The **speculated link** between values and information (fig. 2.3.4) received some degree of support, but proved to be simplistic. In particular the action of the quality of relationships and established track-record proved to be important moderators of staff reactions. For example, where these are both good, then in situations of conflict where one might expect the school to be in any quadrant but ‘Concord’, it may still be in ‘Concord’. This suggests that the framework can at best be used to indicate an ‘average’ state and not necessarily of the moment. This framework is closely linked to the ‘success’ framework of table 5.4b, which is, in turn, linked to the models of headteacher leadership developed in chapter 4. The moderating issues of relationship and track-record suggest also a link to the conflict framework (table 5.6b).

There is a sense in which the framework developed in relation to **conflict** (value, actions, expectations – table 5.6b and fig. 5.6) is simple, but because of its link to professional identity and self-efficacy it is far from simple, being ultimately linked to fundamental questions of the individual (even “Who am I?”). It is further complicated by the link to relationships, track-record (mainly, but not exclusively, of the headteacher), **vicarious-efficacy**, and also school context. When and how then does the headteacher develop that understanding? In some cases levels of understanding will have been gathered from experience (direct or vicarious), but how can this be augmented? Once again this raises questions of headteacher

identification, preparation and support, but it goes beyond that for not all change leads to conflict, but all conflict can have an impact on headteachers (and others), their own sense of self-efficacy and their own professional identity. At a time of considerable managerialism and imposed change, the question of locus of control is not just a question for the teacher in the school, but also for the headteacher. The need for both formal and informal support systems is considerable, perhaps in addition to the 'significant others' referred to towards the end of section 4.3.1.

## **CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMENMENDATIONS**

### **6.1 Introduction**

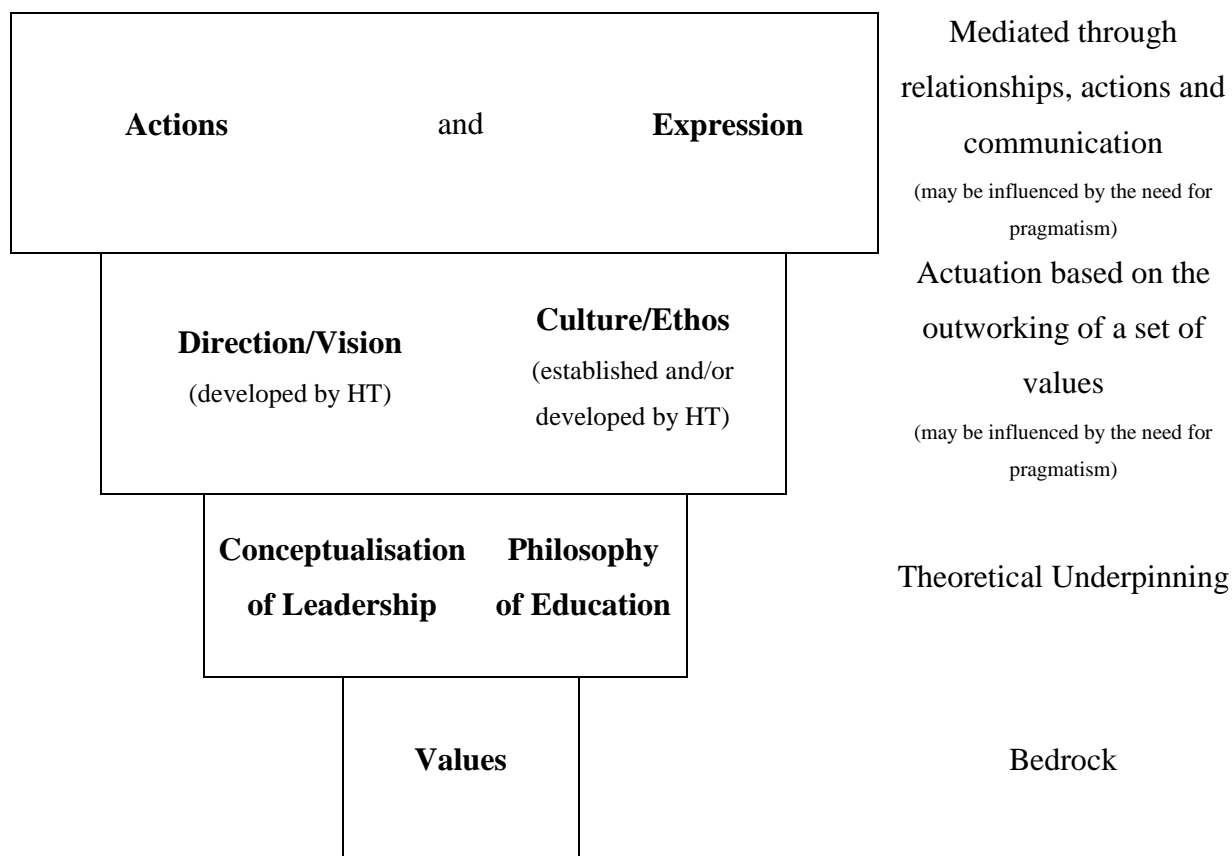
Gronn's (2009) concept of leadership configurations accepts that leaders choose their actions from a range of possibilities and not from within a single paradigm – the outcomes of this study follow this lead. The study's contribution to knowledge is presented in the order of the three research questions. Section 3.2 suggested two project orientations (Wallace & Poulson, 2003) for the study leading to implications for practice and for research, these implications will be presented before suggesting further work and making recommendations.

### **6.2 Contribution to Knowledge**

#### **6.2.1 Research Question 1:**

##### **Headteachers' Declared Conceptualisations of Leadership**

Fig. 4.2.3 sought to provide an answer to RQ1 by the provision of a model that underlies all of the conceptualisations declared or implied by the headteachers.



**Fig. 4.2.3: ‘Values to Action’: a model for headteacher leadership**

A more superficial response to RQ1 may highlight five elements of the headteachers’ conceptualisations of leadership: philosophy of education, participation (usually through consultation), trust, development of staff, and relationships, which are combined in fig. 6.2.1, along with the schools where they were particularly noted and the value types they reflect. The centrality of values is emphasised as are some of the differences between the headteachers, along with many points of similarity. No one theory of leadership is foregrounded, because the headteachers used those aspects of leadership that they saw a situation required, rather than working within a single model; also their leadership and its outworking were values based - failure in this respect would impact on trust (Tschannen-Moran, 2004).

<b>Element</b>	<b>Value type reflected</b>	<b>School</b>
Primacy of Philosophy of Education (emphasising the need for one dimension of extended professionalism)	3 (transrational)	A, B, C, D
Participation (of staff): informal formal	2a (consequences) (possibly 3)	A (to degree C & D) B, C & D (less so A)
Participation (of students) (emphasising the need for a second dimension of extended professionalism)	3	D, to a lesser degree A
Trust   bestowed unless reason not to do so Earned (not always checked up)	3	A, B, C, D A (but actuality?) (D, perhaps B)
Development of Staff Leadership skills Learning As staff choose Use of teams (further emphasising the need for extended professionalism)	2a (consequences)	B, D (implied in C) D A D (less so B)
Relationships  Focus on team  Charisma	3  -	A & D (strong) B & C (less developed) D  A (perhaps also D)
Founded on Headteachers' intra-personal skills (and values) – drawing on one's own strength		

**Table 6.2.1 – Elements of Headteacher Declared Conceptualisations of Leadership**

The five elements presented are not entirely disjoint, for example relationships underpin trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2003), although ‘trust’ in fig. 6.2.1 is intended to be the headteacher’s orientation towards giving trust to others, rather than the giving of trust by the staff that is the concern of Bryk & Schneider (2003). It is the foregrounding of ‘relationships’ and the foundation of intra-personal skills that reflects what a number of the interviewees referred to as emotional intelligence. The need for strong intra-personal skills can be seen in the comments of C-HT, which showed the emotional costs of being a headteacher. The focus on

the team by D-HT represented one mechanism for achieving a degree of support when experiencing those emotional costs.

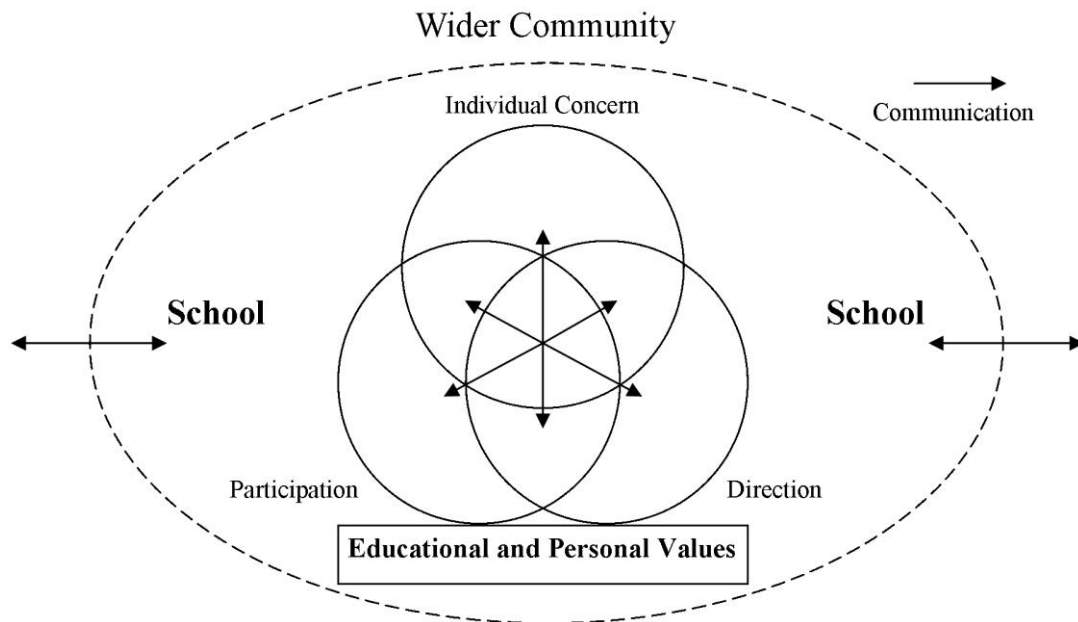
Fig. 4.2.3 is based on data obtained from the field, which confirmed aspects of the stage theories of leadership careers, in particular the importance of early experiences for the development of values and, subsequently, conceptualisations of leadership and philosophies of education. It is, therefore, built upon deep and personal foundations. As with fig. 6.2.1, the failure to foreground any particular leadership theory reflects the fact that the headteachers of the study do not work within a single theory, but seek to use all of the mechanisms to hand (within the limits defined by their value systems) flexibly.

Fig. 4.2.3 has sought to provide an answer that gets below the declared leadership conceptualisations, and therefore move away from a consideration of traits (that each leader is an individual goes without saying and therefore the traits possessed by each leader will vary, but s/he may still be considered effective in her/his leadership), even though the analysis included a consideration of traits (referred to as 'qualities' in this study), and actions. The model identified four dimensions: bedrock, theoretical underpinnings, actuation, and mediation, the latter two being related to, but not the same as, 'between', 'representation' and 'outworking' in fig. 4.4.3. Being derived from four headteachers in a relatively benign context, it is context bound, but by virtue of a degree of abstraction it seeks to be relatable and represents a new view of headteacher leadership.



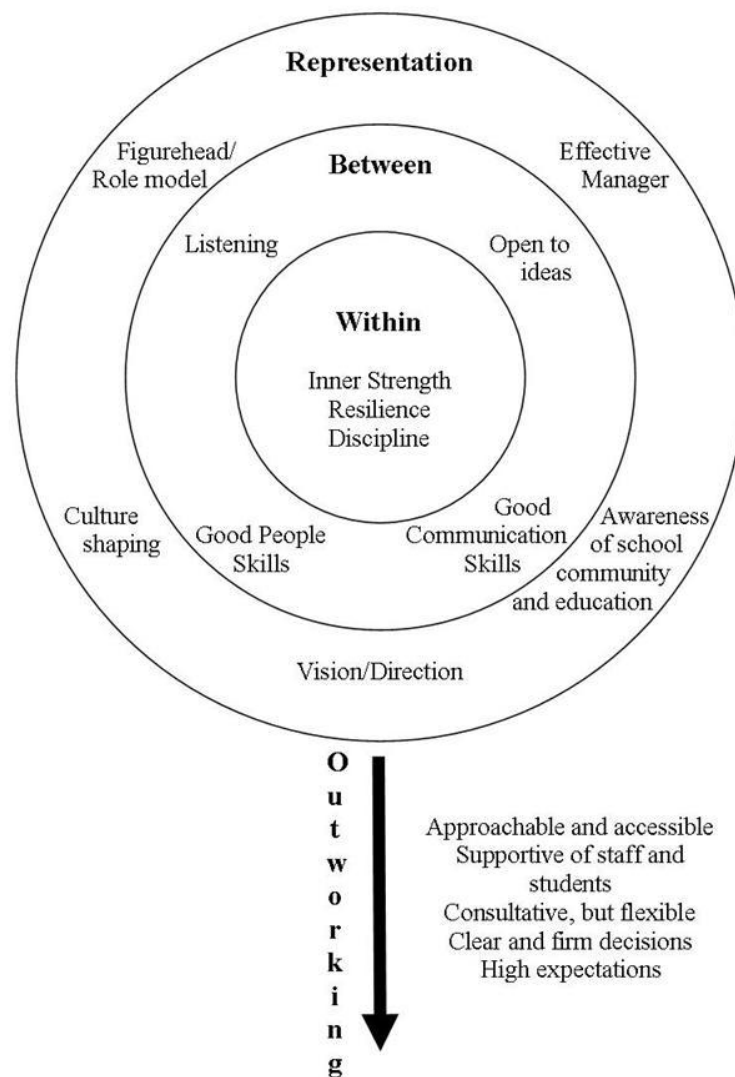
### 6.2.2 Research Question 2:

#### Staff's Implicit (or otherwise) Conceptualisations of Headteacher Leadership



**Fig. 2.4: High-level 'Ideal Headteacher' model**

The literature review generated a synthesis of many papers (fig. 2.4), which represented a proto-framework for addressing the research questions. By virtue of its encapsulation into a single diagram, it is a new representation of key issues related to teacher job satisfaction possessing the advantage of presenting key elements in an accessible manner. The outcomes of the study support fig. 2.4, but move on from the synthesis by presenting different perspectives, degrees of abstraction and levels of detail.

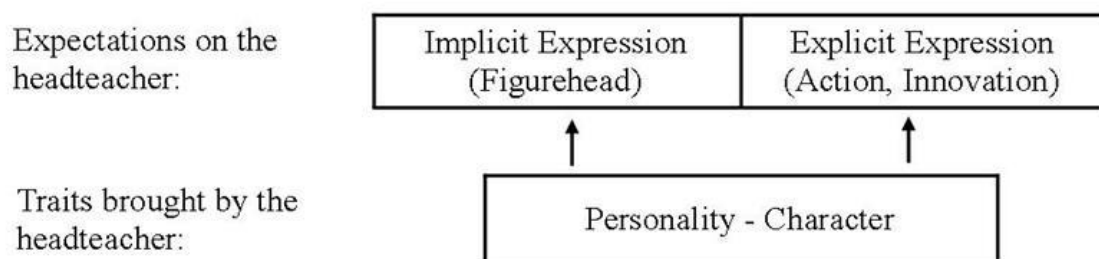


**Fig. 4.4.3: Desired Headteacher Model – the ‘Lollipop’**

Fig. 4.4.3 is an explicit response to RQ2, the detail of which reflects the findings of others (for example Terrell, 1997; Rhodes *et al*, 2008). It represents the expectations of the staff (as in the original question – section 1.1), but what sort of ‘expectations’? Two possibilities are:

- this is what I want to see (expectations as ‘my ideal’)
- this is what I expect to get (expectations modified by experience and possible prejudice)

The interview process included the opportunity for interviewees to reflect on examples of leadership from their pasts that had influenced them, their responses suggest that fig. 4.4.3 reflects expectations in the sense of ‘my ideal’. Those responses also illustrated the extent to which the staff (and their headteachers) were influenced by their experiences. The model contains four dimensions: ‘Within’, ‘Between’, ‘Representation’ and ‘Outworking’. The first two reflect the emphasis, within much material on leadership, of the need for intra- and inter-personal skills, or what may be called emotional intelligence, and ways it is manifested, although it is a little more than that in that it refers to dispositional aspects as well. The dimensions ‘representation;’ and ‘outworking’ are predominantly active in their nature. They answer the questions of ‘What does one see?’ (‘representation’ - almost as in a picture) and ‘How is it done?’ The model confirms fig. 2.4, what is different is the form of presentation and its detail.

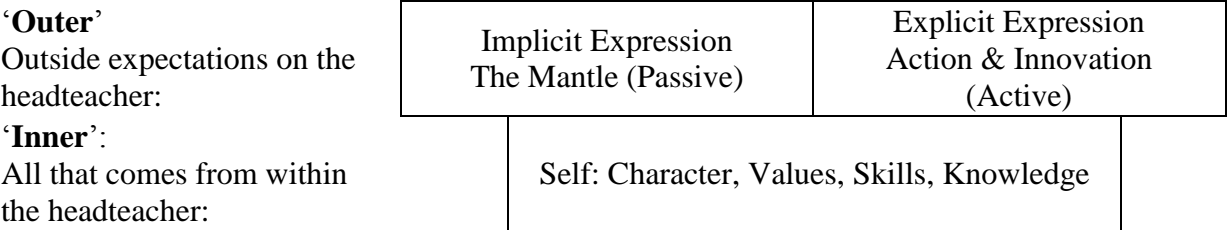


**Fig. 4.3.1a: Two-layered picture of headteacher leadership**

A new and abstracted model was derived from consideration of the SLT interviews, this model being shown in three related forms (figs. 4.3.1a,b&c). Being abstracted, it has been removed substantially from its context but as a result, however, it could be argued that it does not represent an answer to RQ2. Such a response would be superficial, for figs. 4.3.1a&b focus upon those expectations that are placed upon the headteacher and the resources that the

headteacher brings to meet (or not) those expectations. They are, therefore, a stakeholder perspective and an answer RQ2.

**Fig. 4.3.1b: Model A**



**Fig. 4.3.1c: Model B**

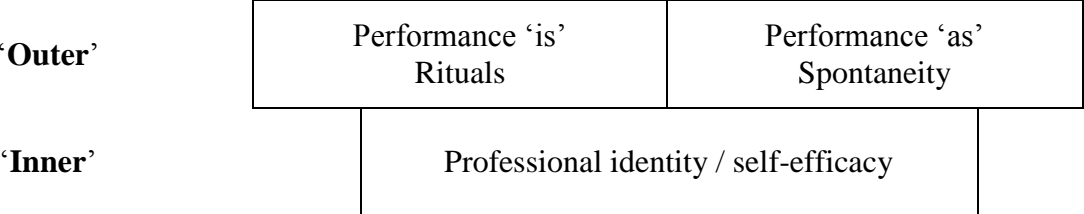


Fig. 4.3.1c, by its focus on ‘performance’, moves away from explicitly addressing expectations, but these are implied by the concepts of rituals and spontaneity. There is a sense in which they are the static (evolutionary) and the dynamic (revolutionary) sides of institutional development, but for both there will be expectations of the headteacher. This marrying of the idea of leadership and performance (Lumby & English, 2009 and Peck & Dickinson, 2010) to conceptualisations of headteacher leadership obtained from the field is new.

Despite their overt differences, a unifying feature of the models represented by fig. 4.2.3, fig. 4.4.3 and figs. 4.3.1a,b&c are the ideas of **inner**, which emphasises all that the headteacher brings from her/his own personage, and **outer**, which emphasises the dealings with all that the position brings (be they relationships, expectations, the mantle, rituals – table 6.2.2) and therefore the demands on intra- and inter-personal and other skills. While each model can be

regarded as discrete, they are also a suite that emphasises different aspects of headteacher leadership conceptualisation. Rather as the light shining through a rotating crystal displays different patterns to the eye, yet it is one crystal, so it is with these models in relation to headteacher leadership: they encapsulate different perspectives of the same phenomenon.

<b>Non-SLT</b>	<b>Headteacher</b>	<b>SLT</b>			<b>Domain</b>
(fig. 4.4.3)	(fig. 4.2.3)	(fig. 4.3.1a)	(fig. 4.3.1b)	(fig. 4.3.1c)	
Within	Bedrock (values)  Underpinning (theory of education, concept of leadership)	Personality  Character	Self	Prof. Identity  Self-efficacy	<b>‘inner’</b>
Between  Representation  Outworking	Actuation (direction/vision; culture/ethos)  Mediation (Actions & Expression)	Implicit Expr. (Figurehead)  Explicit Expr. (Action/Innovation)	The Mantle (Passive)  Action & innovation. (Active)	Performance ‘is’ (Ritual – explicit & implicit)  Performance ‘as’ (Spontaneity)	<b>‘outer’</b>

**Table 6.2.2: Three Models of Headteacher Leadership derived from the Interviewees**

### 6.2.3 Research Question 3:

**What are the perceptions and judgments held by staff of their headteachers’ leadership?**

Answers to RQ3 can be found in section 5.2, but such answers are of no use beyond the specific context and time of the data gathering process. A deeper and more useful response is to look at the reasons why those perceptions and judgments were generated. To that end three significant issues were explored: success, communication and conflict, in an attempt to get

below the surface and seek to understand the underlying question of ‘Why?’ - together they address RQ3.

<b>Level 4 (Judgement)</b>	Student – holistic, specific (results) School – harmony, ‘happy’, moving forward, opinions of other outside school		
<b>Level 3 (aspects of climate)</b>	Academic/achievement orientation; innovation; sense of purpose; worthwhile cause		Positive Culture
<b>Level 2 (impact of the way of working)</b>	Collaboration + Trust + Flexibility (structure, leadership configuration)	Sense of Community	
<b>Level 1 (ways of working)</b>	Relationships + Challenge + Support		
<b>Ground Level</b>	Values of the Headteacher and the Institution; Skills of the Headteacher	Link: HT Values to Action	

**Table 5.4b: Layered Internal view of Headteacher/School Success**

While there was a great deal of agreement between the three groups concerning what constituted headteacher ‘**success**’, fig. 5.4b suggested a significant difference between the headteachers and the rest, namely a single minded focus on the students. Further consideration centred on ‘happiness’ showed that this was not the case and helped to generate a layered model (table 5.4b), in which positive school culture was found to be important. Table 5.4b is a framework concerning an internal view of headteacher success and represents an expression of both the headteachers’ and their staff’s conceptualisations of leadership: it ranges from ‘This is what I want to see’ to ‘I feel valued and supported and good things are being done.’ Several questions follow from this, including those identified in sections 5.4 and 5.7.

In bringing together both staff perceptions and elements of theory (particularly concerning positive school climate), this framework represents a new development in the literature of what ‘headteacher success’ may be, from which a number of implications follow. Consideration of D-DH’s statement “the head is the school” (HT≡Sch) resulted in the development of the concept of **ascribed** professional identity (API) (pertinent also to figs. 4.3.1b&c) and possible implications for accountability judgments and their impact on the headteacher.

<b>Barriers to communication:</b>	
Disposition:	(of staff – resistance, too busy, expectations, forgetting, ...)
Quantity:	(too much, too little, adequacy, ...)
Quality:	(accuracy, timing, avoiding misperceptions, ...)
Procedures/Guidelines:	(unclear, taken for granted, dated, cascade failure...)
Technological:	(not shared, malfunctions, ...)

**Table 5.5a: School based barriers to communication**

The issue of **communication** proved to be problematic - there was evidence (from the study and the literature review) suggesting that it is a problem in most schools, but no solution was found, because people and therefore schools are non-deterministic systems (i.e. schools involve many people, whose mental states and reactions vary according to professional and personal experiences of the past, of the moment and anticipated). Table 5.5a sought to present the major barriers to communication found in the study, at the heart of which was the fact that one is dealing with people, for example too much information for one was found to be too little for another. A member of staff’s response will also be linked to their professional identity and professionalism orientation (the two being linked) and possibly also their sense of self-efficacy. Even so, some approaches to reducing the problem were suggested. While the base of this finding is far less extensive to that of De Nobile & McCormick’s (2008b) study, it

supports many of their findings, although it does question the sufficiency of their concept of ‘adequacy of information’.

<i>Degree of values-consonance</i>	High	<b>COLD</b> LT distant “being done to” Secretive Outputs approved Suspicion	<b>CONCORD</b> LT trusted “working with” Open Outputs approved Harmony
	Low	<b>CONFLICT</b> LT distrusted “them and us” Secrete conclave Outputs rejected Open conflict	<b>CONDEMNED</b> LT acknowledged “listening, but not hearing” Showing ‘warts and all’ Outputs rejected Disbelief
		Low	High
		<i>Quality of Information Flow</i>	

**Fig. 2.3.4: Speculative link between SLT-Staff values-consonance and information flow, in the manner of Wallace (2002, p182)**

A **speculative link** between values and information flow was suggested in fig. 2.3.4. Some support for this link was found in the study, but also it was found that relationships and track-record (and therefore established trust) could be strong moderators of staff reaction. To test the speculative link on just four similar schools is not an adequate test of its validity, merely an indicator of possible validity. The speculative link represents a new departure foregrounding the link between values, information flow and elements of school climate (the four quadrants), plus the potential influence of relationships and track-record on its application.



The moderators of relationships and track-record were also found to be factors in the reactions of staff in situations of **conflict**. Rather than adopting a complex micro-political perspective (Marshall, 1991; Hatcher, 2004), with consequential issues around power and its use, the framework (table 5.6b) and model (fig. 5.6) abstracted from specific instances to try to address three questions:

What are the fundamental causes of conflict?

How is the cause perceived by staff?

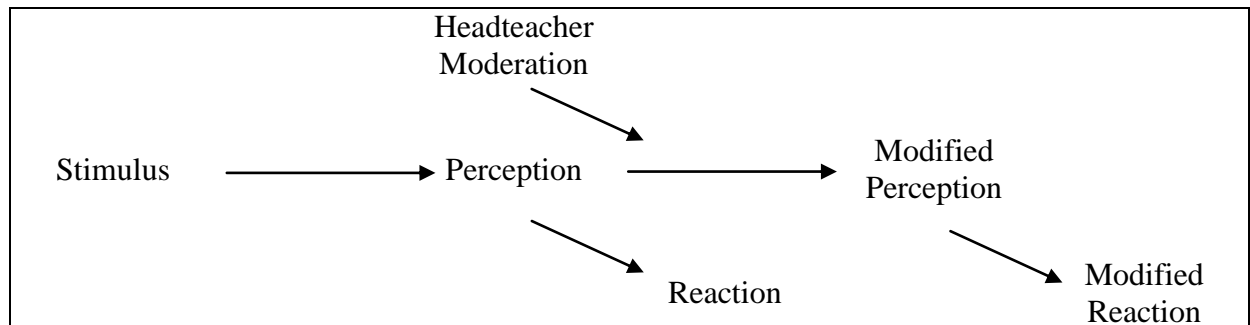
How can the reaction be moderated by headteachers?

<b>Causes of Conflict</b>	<b>Perceptions</b>	<b>Leadership Moderating Practices</b>
<b>Values</b> Type 3 – basic beliefs Type 2a – consequences Type 2b – consensus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attack on my values</li> <li>• Attack on my professional identity</li> <li>• Attack on my sense of self-efficacy</li> <li>• Breach of the Psychological Contract</li> <li>• Breach of trust</li> <li>• Loss of locus of control</li> <li>• Failure to act/be as a headteacher ought</li> </ul>	Strong positive relationships  Strong support  Positive track-record
<b>Actions</b> Innovation/change		
<b>Expectations</b>		

**Table 5.6b: Conflict Framework**

Table 5.6b recognises the intensely personal nature of conflict (the ‘perceptions’), but it does not reflect (and does not seek to reflect) the rich detail that may lie at the heart of conflict. Equally some issues are implied, for example the moderating practices of ‘relationships’ and ‘track-record’ may prove to be negative and exacerbating. The overall simplicity is a strength, because it enables a complex phenomenon to be captured and held in the mind to aid

analysis: it is its application that may yield the complexity. It is, therefore a new perspective that may prove useful and is offered as such.



**Fig. 5.6: Conflict Model**

The analysis underlying the development of this framework and its associated model represents a synthesis of several elements of theory, including professional identity, self-efficacy, psychological contract and locus of control, in order to understand what happens in situations of conflict. One result was the development of the concept of **vicarious-efficacy**, defined as a form of efficacy based on a belief (founded on trust, respect and track-record) in the efficacy of the headteacher (or change leader) (“I believe s/he can help me to do this” – section 5.6). This represents a development of the concepts of self- and collective-efficacy.

A unifying element to all of these responses to RQ3 (with the possible exception of table 5.5a) is relationships (on the basis that they underpin ‘trust’). When headteacher-staff (and by extension headteacher-student and headteacher-parent) relationships are strong and positive, trust is likely to be enhanced, a positive school climate prevail and negative judgments moderated and conflict avoided or ameliorated, especially if the headteacher has a strong positive track-record, preferably at the school. (School D is the counter-example with regard to issues of communication.) If positive school culture can be used as a proxy for

relationships, then a leadership and management style that helps to generate such a culture is to be strongly encouraged. The analysis could be taken to suggest that all is dependent upon the headteacher, but the open nature of fig. 5.6 means that it is not so, others may also have input (moderating or exacerbating) to the 'perception'. For schools in benign contexts, this is a reasonable expectation, but for those in significantly more challenging contexts it may be less so (Maele & Houtte, 2012). Beneath this unifying element lie intra- and inter-personal skills, vision (proxied by 'direction' much of the time) and the implication of strong intellectual skills (Anderson *et al*, 2001). Indeed these elements could be said to underlie all of the findings of this study, with the possible exception of the barriers to communication.

#### **6.2.4 Subsidiary Issues**

The literature review suggested that 'professionalism orientation' (PO) lies on a spectrum from restricted to extended (Evans, 1997; Hoyle, 1975): this study suggests that it may not be so simple. The expectation of the headteachers was that teachers take part in extra-curricular activity and that this is an enriching and extending aspect of a student's education: no teacher argued against this. In providing such opportunities, many teachers displayed an extended PO, but at the same time for some of the same teachers PO was restricted, in that they were not concerned with the broader developments in education at national or local level, but were parochial in their perspective. This would indicate that while PO is a valid concept, it may possess dimensions (partly reflected in fig. 6.2.1). Such dimensions may include: learning development (lacking in many staff at the time of the interviews), broader view of student education (strongly evident in all schools), local and national perspectives (lacking in many

staff), and leadership (or career) development. This 'dimension' of leadership development encountered an element of resistance amongst some middle leaders. There was some support from the interviews that this resistance may be linked to the professional identity of the middle leaders (Hatcher, 2004), perhaps reflecting the personal cost to the middle leaders of accepting the implications of such development: while their authority is *de jure* legitimated by their position, it is also *de facto* legitimated by their department members, therefore to assimilate and act on the development may be to reduce the *de facto* legitimacy of their authority. An extension of their PO may be deemed to be at too high a cost.

Participation proved to be an important element in the *modus operandi* of the headteachers. Of note is that Tuckwell's (1999) observation that the perception of the validity of participation decreases as one descends the school's hierarchy structure received a degree of support, but that perception may be influenced by how the participation/consultation is organised. Formal systems of consultation using meeting structures, are likely to mean that in many cases when earlier meetings have been held and the results of such discussions reflected in subsequent meetings, this could be seen as decisions having already been made. Equally, informal systems, by their nature may be perceived as secretive and not open and therefore not reflecting genuine participation. The literature review included some discussion on what participation might be, but the philosophical differences found therein were not found in this study, however what was supported by both the headteachers and their staff was the flexibility that lies behind Gronn's (2009) concept of 'leadership configurations'.

### 6.3 Implications

The demands on the headteacher of a school are considerable. S/he is expected to have a secure values base from which flow her/his philosophy of education and conceptualisation of leadership. S/he is expected to have very strong intra- and inter-personal skills that lead to positive relationships with others, helping to secure high levels of trust from those with whom s/he works. S/he is required to have a deep understanding of the expectations placed upon her/him by the various stakeholders, including the staff and the institution itself (manifested by the 'mantle' and the 'rituals'). This is not unreasonable, but it is demanding. How then does the headteacher acquire all of these skills?

Within such a context the issues of headteacher preparation, identification and support are of great importance. Right at the start of this thesis, the literature spoke of the importance of the position of headteacher for a school and its potential impact on the lives of the students and the staff. Discussions about fig. 4.2.3, in the light of headteacher career stage theories, suggested that values are developed through all that is observed and thought about from childhood through to headship acquisition. The study suggests this would also be true of the development of the philosophy of education and conceptualisations of leadership, but how does the potential headteacher gain an understanding of the expectations of others on her/him (fig. 4.4.3)? In part this is through her/his career in education, but what of the differences in expectations for different staff groups (MS, TLR, SLT), the meeting of which may enhance job satisfaction and trust? That staff like a flexible response to leadership and management may be obvious to some potential headteachers, but preparation for headship needs to ensure it is a message heard by all. This flexibility could include the mixed use of informal and

formal systems of consultation, but it is not clear when one may be more efficacious than the other – further study is needed to help headteachers understand the efficacy of different consultation mechanisms.

What of the expectations that may manifest themselves in the ‘mantle’ or the ‘rituals’ of a school? Elements of the mantle could be taught explicitly during the period of preparation, as might elements of implicit ritual. The same may not be true of explicit ritual, for that is likely to be different from school to school (although some overlap is likely) and may be bound up in institutional identity and be manifested as part of the API (for example, headteacher as ‘President of the Old Boys Club’). How can a potential headteacher be prepared for such expectations so that  $MPI=API$ ? For those appointed to headship from within such schools, a process of acculturation would probably have taken place such that the prospective headteacher would be ready to assimilate the API leading to actuation from within the role, although where then is the scope for change? (This latter echoes the tension between professional (tending to emphasise innovation and reform) and organisational (tending to encourage stability and tradition) socialisation processes in the development of the headteacher (Crow, 2007).) For those appointed from schools with very different rituals, it becomes incumbent on the appointing body to ensure that such elements are made clear, the problem being that for those within the school they may be taken-for-granted. The solution may be the use of a consultant for the appointing process to ensure that such elements are made explicit to the prospective headteachers, so that any potential conflict from  $MPI \neq API$  is reduced.

The question was asked “What does it mean for a headteacher to be successful?” The answer provided in table 5.4b is multi-faceted and reflects the concerns of those working within schools. It places a strong emphasis on process. Several interviewees realised that those outside of schools may well have different expectations, perhaps focussing much more on external exam results and their encounters with the students. For some, results may be judged by whether the students achieved what they needed. For others a key question might be how the results of one school compare to another, or to similar schools and similar students. Section 5.7 reflected on the extent to which good processes lead to good results (as A-HT suggested) and to what extent good results imply good process. This is an important debate, for at its heart it concerns the purpose of education and what is to be valued in education. Achieving accord amongst all stakeholders would seem unlikely, but that does not negate the need for the on-going debate. Certainly table 5.4b is consistent with the research on teacher job satisfaction and, by extension, both teacher retention and student standards. This is desirable, but for a headteacher accountability can have high personal stakes and sometimes results can appear to be everything irrespective of process. Where accountability judgments are paper based and process invisible, it may appear that the ends justify the means – not necessarily the message to give to our children.

In considering ‘success’ the concept of **ascribed** professional identity was introduced. Consideration was also given to the situation where  $MPI \neq API$ , the vulnerability of the headteacher that it may generate and the possible consequences thereof. As an extension of the literature on professional identity, it asks to what extent professional identity is personal and to what extent it is contextual (both of the profession and of the institution). The analysis suggests that they are different, although of course context will impact on the personal. While

to the writer the difference feels intuitive, that does not mean it stands up to critical analysis. As one element of the potential strains on a headteacher, a position for which candidates are in short supply, it needs further exploration so that a deeper understanding of the stresses and strains of headship can be reached, leading to an improved understanding of how to prepare potential headteachers better and support them more effectively when they are in post. In an age of reducing local authorities (and the support that traditionally they provided for schools) and ever increasing accountability of headship, the need grows if we are to ensure a good supply of effective headteachers for our children's schools.

The discussion on communication was unsatisfactory in that it failed to produce any resolution of the 'conundrum' (C-DH) that communication in schools represents. While the work of De Nobile & McCormick (2008b) was found useful, the fact that communication is an on-going problem in many schools suggests that this issue is in need of extensive study, so that approaches that may resolve the 'conundrum' may be generated. Improving communication may help increase trust, but if the climate is not right, the impact could be otherwise – this is one message from fig. 2.3.4 (the 'speculative link'). This returns one back to the question of values and relationships – important issues in this study. Improved headship preparation is unlikely to change a person's values, but it may sensitise the person to their importance. The same is true of the ability of a prospective headteacher to sustain positive and supportive relationships, although it may be true that the underlying skills could be honed. The quality of the appointment process in delving into these areas is important, for if the candidates are not adequately prepared then their skills may not be good enough for the job that they seek.



At the heart of the conflict framework (fig. 5.6b) is the sequence of: 'This is the issue. This is how it will be perceived. This is what I need to do to reduce (or remove) the potential concerns, thereby reducing the conflict.' Unfortunately the openness of the system does mean that others may (and probably will) input into the system with positive or negative impact. Concerning change, it suggests that if success is sought, the change leader needs to understand how others may react to the change and be ready with responses that are intended to be ameliorative of concerns. Once again, this places an onus on how headteachers are prepared for and supported in headship. The analysis resulted in an extension of the concept of efficacy to that of **vicarious-efficacy**, but within the 'perceptions' (table 5.6b) there is also scope for considering the impact on the **teacher** of MPI $\neq$ API. Vicarious-efficacy, aided by the moderating practices of the headteacher, may be one way to help move from MPI $\neq$ API to MPI=API by generating the belief that it is the right thing to do and can be done with the help of the change leader. Increasing the understanding of the link between professional identity, self-efficacy and conflict may help to improve teacher and headteacher job satisfaction and, ultimately, student outcomes. For the headteacher a focus on the SLT as a team may be supportive of her/him in meeting the demands of the position, but an alternative or additional mechanism may be the use of a professional 'significant other' (PSO) who is able to help the headteacher as s/he leads the school. In order to avoid any potential role conflict and thereby aid headteacher-PSO dialogue, the PSO would not be in a situation where s/he can influence accountability judgments on the headteacher or the school and therefore would not be the same as the one time School Improvement Partner (DCSF, 2007). In schools where there is a close, robust and trusting relationship between the headteacher and the Chair of the Governing Body (GB), despite potential accountability issues the Chair of the GB could be operating as the PSO (the traditional 'critical friend'), indeed in some schools this is the case.

(One weakness of such an approach would be that the Chair of the GB would be unlikely to be dispassionate since it is also her/his school, although over time any PSO may acquire that perspective.) In other schools, issues of accountability and also of expertise and time may mean this is not or cannot be the case. In such situations alternative arrangements may include peer headteachers (although available time may be an issue and also a possible sense of rivalry) and external consultants (for whom competence and cost could be issues). The identification of and training for the PSO, however the role is enacted, would be important.

Two possibilities have been raised about the concept of professionalism orientation (PO), the first is that this concept may possess several dimensions and the second that there appears to be a link between PO and professional identity (PI). Specifically, PO would appear to be a part of PI. That the headteachers in the study expected a form of extended PO is suggestive of an API. While this did not lead to conflict in these four schools ( $MPI=API$ ), the concerns expressed about middle leaders would indicate that for some middle leaders  $MPI \neq API$ , with strategies being used to address the issue. Further study of the concept of PO and also its link to PI is called for, along with their role in both school climate and conflict, to enable enhanced job satisfaction for both teachers and headteachers and improved student outcomes.

## **6.4 Further Work**

The study has offered a number of models, frameworks and concepts all derived from a relatively narrow context – state, boys’ selective schools in a region of England. Selective schools, boys’ or otherwise, are not all of one mould and some are less selective than others, indeed some comprehensive schools are more de facto selective than some overtly selective schools. While some of the models/frameworks may hold their context fairly strongly, others are offered as being more generally relatable. If these frameworks and models are valid interpretations of the data from the study, then for each one a common question is whether it is applicable/relatable to a wider range of contexts.

### **6.4.1 Models of Headteacher Leadership**

The ‘values to action’ model (fig. 4.2.3) assumed a theoretical underpinning, as found in the schools in the study. Within the study schools the philosophy of education in general had primacy over the conceptualisation of leadership, to what extent is that a luxury of context? Within a system of high accountability to external bodies (as in England) is such an approach too idealistic and not practical for schools in less benign contexts? Formal and informal approaches to consultation were seen in the schools studied. To what extent is the division valid and if it is valid, when might one mechanism be more appropriate than the other? How does this relate to context? Given the importance of an extended professionalism orientation to the work of these schools and the prevailing school climate, further work on this concept, including its link to professional identity and its possible dimensionality may yield further insights into successful school leadership.

The 'Desired Headteacher Model' (fig. 4.4.3) postulated four dimensions: within, between, representation and outworking. To what extent does this represent a valid breakdown of the main elements of the expectations of school staff of their headteachers? What are the implications for headteacher identification, preparation and support of the expectations reflected in the model (and significant elements of the literature review, not least the 'Ideal Headteacher Model' (fig. 2.4))?

The two-layered model (figs. 4.3.1a,b&c) raises many questions. In both fig. 4.3.1a ('two-layered picture') and fig. 4.3.1b ('Model A') the link to expectations is explicit, indeed it is a key emphasis of the models, as is the first layer representing "All that comes from within the headteacher". Are these models too simplistic to have relevance? If they are relevant, are they valid units for analysis of the real work of headship? In what way does the 'mantle' (fig. 4.3.1b) present itself in the role of headteacher? Is this a valid construct or just a fiction born of the specific contexts examined in the study? If the 'mantle' is a reality, how do headteachers perceive and understand it and the possibilities and/or limitations that it raises? How does the 'mantle' link to headteacher professional identity and self-efficacy?

'Model B' (fig. 4.3.1c) moves the focus to that of 'performance' and specifically (in the upper layer) to 'ritual' and 'spontaneity'. To what extent does 'ritual' (in the broad sense used in this study) feature within schools and to what extent does it depend upon context? What strategies of leadership are used to successfully manage and (where necessary) change ritual? How does ritual interact with institutional identity and also with headteacher and teacher professional identity and stakeholder (such as governor) identity?

Fig. 4.3.1c further divided ritual into the explicit (which would inhabit an overtly theatrical realm and represent literal performance ('is') – but not all literal performance) and implicit (which may be less overtly theatrical). In doing so, it has demonstrated some of the scope of this approach to leadership study and intimated the potential it may have. As a means of looking at leadership, it would seem ready for further exploration.

#### **6.4.2 Perceptions and Judgments**

In the findings about headteacher 'success' (section 5.4) many questions were raised, particularly given that table 5.4b (concerning 'success') places a strong emphasis on aspects of process. The table may appear to conflate school and headteacher success, suggesting  $HT \equiv Sch$ . Is such a conflation valid (de jure/de facto)? Exploration of  $HT \equiv Sch$  was undertaken, but further study is called for. In a context of high levels of accountability, is it true to suggest that a 'failing' school implies a 'failing' headteacher, or a 'successful' school implies a 'successful' headteacher? How is this reflected in operation? Where such identification exists, what is the impact on the headteacher and how can it be managed? Further study to aid the understanding of how  $HT \equiv Sch$  relates to MPI, API and the impact of accountability judgments may aid the understanding of what is happening and how headteachers can be better supported in their work of school leadership.

Table 5.5a reflects what was seen regarding communication in the schools studied, but does not claim to address all school contexts with regard to barriers to communication. This study suggests that issues about communication continue (also found to be on-going by Weindling

& Dimmock, 2006). In the light of the ‘conundrum’ and the ‘speculative link’ (fig. 2.3.4) concerning information flow, values, school climate and conflict, further study of school communication strategies is called for. In particular, case studies of successful strategies where stakeholders feel communication is good may provide useful advice and guidance to headteachers as they prepare for and undertake headship. Further study in a range of contexts may prove to be of both academic interest and practical benefit.

Table 5.6b and fig. 5.6 concerned conflict in a school. They attempted to be both simple and capable of application in a range of contexts. To what extent are these complete pictures of conflict, in the sense that the basic causes, perceptions and moderating processes are identified? How can such a framework/model be applied to situations of conflict in order to ameliorate difficulty? Links to values, professional identity, self-efficacy (including the postulated vicarious-efficacy), psychological contract, trust, locus of control and expectations have been proposed and it is suggested that studies in additional school settings may yield a more complete understanding of conflict and its avoidance/amelioration (where that is deemed appropriate). Further study may help to identify strategies for headteachers and others to avoid damaging conflict and how they can be supported to bring any such conflict to an end, such that the educational provision is enhanced and positive relationships with stakeholders maintained or generated.

## 6.5 Recommendations

**Preparation:** If nothing else this study emphasises the importance of headteachers being aware of the expectations of their teachers, including different groups of teachers, if they wish to increase teacher job satisfaction, teacher involvement in the wider aspects of their schools and student outcomes. Developing an understanding of such expectations in headteachers as they prepare for headship, informed by this study or subsequent studies from a wider contextual base, is therefore a recommendation from this study.

**Appointment:** When appointing a headteacher, the appointing panel is likely to consist mainly of Governing Body members. As such it is likely that elements of the school, including aspects of ritual and expectations will be taken-for-granted and not made clear to applicants. An outside consultant who knows a school well (perhaps a professional significant other (see ‘Support’)) is likely to have a good understanding of the school, but not take ritual and expectations for granted. It is recommended that in all headship appointments such a consultant is engaged to ensure that all information provided is complete, appropriate and does not make assumptions that are unreasonable.

**Support:** The position of headteacher is a demanding one and the expectations are high, such that for some the consequences of negative judgments on a school can include the loss of their jobs. Headship is also fraught with emotional costs, sometimes with little positive to compensate. In such a scenario all headteachers need support. For some that will come from the members of their senior leadership team, for others it will also come from their chair of the Governing Body. For new headteachers additional support is often provided by peer

headteachers, but this can be a problem with finding sufficient time to support adequately. In England, Government provides 'School Improvement Partners' (SIPs), but they are also expected to make judgments on those they support and can be held accountable by Ofsted for negative outcomes to inspections. This means that SIPs undertake a role that includes role-conflict. It is recommended that support is provided by experienced and knowledgeable 'professional significant others' (despite the potential drawbacks identified by Crow (2007)) for whom there is no role conflict, this support being available for all headteachers and paid for by central Government.

**Research - Communication:** Communication is an on-going concern in many schools and there is evidence that schools do not feel they have solved this 'conundrum', with subsequent dissatisfaction being felt by both headteachers and their staff. It is recommended that research should be undertaken into schools that feel that they have succeeded in solving or minimising any negative impact of the conundrum so that a range of successful strategies could be made available to headteachers and schools.

**Research – Rituals and Mantle:** The study has proposed a view of headteacher leadership that speaks of the 'mantle' and also 'rituals' (implicit and explicit) that help to form the expectations that are placed on a headteacher. The explicit rituals, being theatrical in nature are manifestations of leadership as performance 'is' (as are, less overtly, the implicit rituals). It is recommended that research into rituals in school and the mantle be undertaken to understand their role in the working of a school and in the life of the headteacher. Consideration could include the extent to which they represent part of the ascribed professional identity of the headteacher and the impact on the headteacher when this does not



match their personal professional identity (*my* professional identity (MPI)). Research should cover schools in a number of different contexts, with comparisons being made, the outcomes helping professionals and researchers to understand how leadership is impacted by them and how headteachers can manage and change them to improve educational provision at their schools.

**Research – professional identity, efficacy, professionalism and conflict:** The study has postulated the concepts of *ascribed* professional identity (API) and *vicarious*-efficacy. It has also postulated a dimensionality to professionalism orientation and that this concept is linked to professional identity. Further, it has suggested that there is a link between these concepts and conflict, with a mechanism being proposed. It is recommended that research be undertaken to confirm or otherwise these concepts and to further understand how conflict can be avoided or alleviated using the framework offered in this study as a starting point. The outcomes should aim to provide headteachers with tools to improve change management and also to help understand how to manage situations where  $MPI \neq API$ , and also, where  $HT \equiv Sch$  is not accepted by the headteacher, to achieve positive outcomes for all. Issues related to accountability, such as those raised in this study could also be included as forms of conflict.

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# APPENDICES

**TABLE OF APPENDICES**

<b>Sample Letter 1: Letter to Headteachers after agreeing to take part in the study</b>	218
<b>Sample Letter 2: Letter to teachers who will take part in the study</b>	220
<b>Semi-Structured Interview Schedule</b>	221
<b>Sample Interview Transcript: B-HT (anonymised)</b>	223
<b>Sample Interview Transcript: C-TLR2a (anonymised)</b>	229
<b>Sample Interview Transcript – Key Points: D-MSb (anonymised)</b>	234
<b>Sample Key Points: Influences - School A (anonymised)</b>	238
<b>Sample Key Points: Across Schools - Typifies (TLR) (anonymised)</b>	241

## **Sample Letter 1: Letter to Headteachers after agreeing to take part in the study**

Dear

Thank you for agreeing for your school to take part in my research, which is undertaken in my capacity as a Doctor of Education student of the University of Birmingham. This work constitutes an on-going personal target agreed by my Governors.

The thesis has the following title:

**Why do they think as they do?  
Reflections of school staff on school leadership and how it is practiced at their state  
selective boys' school**

The first part of the title tries to capture the essence of what the research is about. It is an attempt to understand how teachers generate the perceptions they do of the senior leadership in their school. This is achieved through addressing three research questions:

**RQ1. What are the implicit theories of school leadership held by school staff?**

**RQ2. What are the perceptions held by school staff of the leadership practice in their school?**

**RQ3. What is the headteacher's declared theory of headteacher school leadership?**

Implicit theories are the ideas which we take for granted that may be generated over a period of time and which we rarely question or express. An exploration of those theories and where they come from may help to generate increased understanding of the perceptions that school staff have of their school's leadership. This can then be contrasted with what the headteacher declares to be her/his theory of school leadership. The hope is that this will lead to an increased understanding of the issue of how staff interact with their leaders and in doing so it chimes in with other approaches to this topic. The background to this is the international research that has been done on staff motivation, morale and job satisfaction and this has been used to inform the research.

To undertake this research, I will need to interview nine staff members at your school:

- 2 teachers without any TLR payments
- 2 teachers on a TLR2
- 2 teachers on a TLR1
- 1 member of the SLT (other than the Headteacher or the Bursar)
- The Bursar (or equivalent)
- The Headteacher

Each interview is expected to take up to 45 minutes and will be taped, the tape then being transcribed with the transcription being given to the interviewee for checking before it is used. As part of the work, I undertake to keep each respondent's contribution as strictly confidential

and to ensure that no harm may return on her/him. In the thesis and any associated papers, all contributions will therefore be treated as anonymous, as will the schools themselves.

In order to help generate a context for the respondent, which may be useful in the study, each respondent will be asked to complete a simple questionnaire which I have attached. I have also attached a copy of the letter that each respondent would be given and a set of the questions to be asked.

If you are still happy to be part of this study, please contact me so that I can visit you and arrange dates for the interviews to be conducted.

Thank you for your help.

Yours sincerely

Richard Shephard  
Headteacher



## **Sample Letter 2: Letter to teachers who will take part in the study**

Dear

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this gathering of data for the doctoral thesis I am undertaking at Birmingham University. The title of the work is:

**Why do they think as they do?  
Reflections by school staff on school leadership and how it is practiced at their state  
selective boys' school**

The thesis takes for granted that all school staff, teaching and non-teaching, will have some expectations of their headteacher and of school leadership in general, although the latter will not always be explicitly developed. These expectations may be lived up to in their own school or they may not – probably it will be between the two. Equally, the headteacher will have expectations of school leadership that may be the same or to some extent different to other school staff. The thesis will seek to reflect on all sides of these issues so as to generate some understanding of the development of school staff perceptions, with a view to helping to inform school leadership practice.

To this end I will ask you to complete a short biographical questionnaire and agree to be interviewed by me. The questionnaire seeks to help me develop a picture of your career stage and background, which may be helpful in understanding the points you make in your interview. No questions in the questionnaire are intended to be contentious, but if you feel unhappy about answering any of the questions, please leave them blank. Where it is only possible to provide approximate dates, they will be fine. All of the information you provide will be treated as strictly confidential and will not be divulged in a manner that can be attributed in the final report or any papers linked thereto.

The interview, which will be taped for transcribing purposes, will take up to 45 minutes and will explore the areas of school leadership in general and at your school. All that you say will be treated as confidential and you will be provided with a copy of the transcript of what you said so that you can check it before it is finalised. No names will be used in the thesis and no comments will be attributed to an identifiable individual. By this means no harm will fall upon any participant.

Thank you for your help.

Yours sincerely

Richard Shephard  
Doctor of Education Student

## **Semi-Structured Interview Schedule**

### **Why do they think as they do? Reflections of school staff on school leadership and how it is practiced at their state selective boys' school**

#### **Research Questions:**

**RQ1. What are the implicit theories of school leadership held by school staff?**

**RQ2. What are the perceptions held by school staff of the leadership practice in their school?**

**RQ3. What is the headteacher's declared theory of headteacher school leadership?**

#### **General areas to be covered in the interview of school staff:**

1. How do you see the role of a headteacher? (RQ1)
2. What are the implications for a headteacher to lead a school? (RQ1)
3. Leadership can be the prerogative of the headteacher alone or it can be shared. Where do you stand on this? (RQ1)
4. Is there any special event or incident which stands out or typifies the leadership practice at this school? (RQ2)
5. What aspects of leadership are particularly successful at your school and what are not so successfully addressed? (RQ2)
6. How do you see leadership being practiced at your school? (Press for judgement?)  
Are there any particular reasons or incidents that lead you to make that judgement? (RQ2)

*(For those with experience at another school:*

7. From your knowledge, how do you think leadership here differs from other schools of which you are aware? (RQ2))
8. What areas of leadership do you think the school and more specifically the headteacher does well at? (RQ2)  
Please explain why you think that.
9. What areas of leadership do you think the school and more specifically the headteacher could do better? (RQ2)  
Please explain why you think that.

**General areas to be covered in the headteacher interview:**

1. How do you see the role of a headteacher?
2. What are the implications for a headteacher to lead a school?  
*(If required, ask about pressing issues and outcome.)*
3. Leadership can be the prerogative of the headteacher alone or it can be shared. Where do you stand on this? Are you able to illustrate what you mean?
4. Is there any special event or incident which stands out or typifies the leadership practice at this school?
5. What aspects of leadership are particularly successful at your school and what are not so successfully addressed?
6. How do you see leadership being practiced at your school? (Press for judgement?)  
Are there any particular reasons or incidents that lead you to make that judgement?
7. From your knowledge, how do you think leadership here differs from other schools of which you are aware?
8. What areas of leadership do you think the school and more specifically you do well at?  
Please explain why you think that.
9. What areas of leadership do you think the school and more specifically you could do better at?  
Please explain why you think that.

